

# 織田信奈の野望

全国版

14

春日みかげ  
III みやま零



ファンタジア文庫







相良義陽  
「さがりよしひ」

大友宗麟  
「おともそうりん」

織田信奈の野望  
全圖版  
14





## 本州の戦局

**天** 下布武を進める織田信奈陣営には未曾有の危機が迫っていた。

日本最強の騎馬隊を持つ武田信玄、武力最強の上杉謙信、難攻不落の小田原城に籠もる北条氏康。関東を統べる三姫武将がまさかの同盟を結び、上洛を開始。

「手取川」にて先に衝突した上杉謙信との合戦で、大きな犠牲なく撤退に成功したものの、結果は敗戦。

さらには西からは小早川・吉川の軍勢が迫っていた。とくに圧倒的な吉川の進撃に対し、光秀の守る丹波は諸将が次々と毛利に降伏し、完全に孤立してしまっていた。

絶望的な状況のなか、謙信と足並みを揃えさせないために、信奈は松平元康と共に信玄を牽制。

その最中——元康は信じられないのを見た。合戦に備える松平陣営に、本多正信が連れてきた者。それは自らと瓜二つな姫武将。名を「世良田二郎三郎」と言った。

# 織田信奈の野望 全国版

❖『織田信奈の野望 全国版13』までのあらすじ



## 九州の戦局

**西** から進軍する毛利家を止めるため、九州・大友宗麟の元へ向かう良晴、官兵衛、フロイス。

毛利家の仇敵である宗麟を動かすことで、織田軍と大友軍で毛利を挟撃し、進撃を止める算段を立てていたのだ。

大友家は現在九州の覇権を争って島津家と抗争中。この戦を止めるのが最大の目的だった。

しかしその道中、小早川隆景の策略で良晴は一人海上で分断され、相良家に漂着。相良家そして島津家にまつわる姉妹のすれ違いを目の当たりにし、彼女たちの心を解いた良晴。自らの副将として、そして姉として相良家の元当主・義陽が加わったのだ。

一方、大友家では黒田官兵衛に異変が発生していた。宣教師・ガスパールに自らの二流の未来を伝えられた彼女は、軍師として大友軍を率いて、島津家との合戦をはじめてしまったのだ。

# **Chapter 1 - Akukan Ichiryuu – (Evil Kanbei is Number One)**

During the Sengoku era.

In the rising military power of Shimazu clan of Satsuma Hayato. Among the possible candidate of conqueror of Shura country of Kyushu where a long battle between the north and south have continued since the times of Mongol invasion. It has been narrowed down into 3 clans.

Ruling over Bungo, Buzen, Chikuzen, the four countries of Chikugo with Arima clan of Hizen, and also Aso clan of north Higo as their subordinate clan is “The Queen of Six Countries of Kyushu” Otomo Sorin.

The Shimazu 4 sisters who has gained control over Satsuma, Osumi and followed by South Higo and South Hyuga.

And lastly, by controlling neighboring clans and oppose Otomo’s military power and while they are a keen and eager subordinate of Otomo clan as for right now, they are still vigilantly waiting for an opportunity for betrayal and independency, is the bear of Hizen, Ryuzoji Takanobu.

Especially after making Sagara Yoshihi of south Higo as their subordinate, its the momentum of Shimazu army who has destroyed Ito clan of south Hyuga and violently expelling them to Bungo. Otomo Sorin on the other hand has appointed Kuroda Kanbei as the new strategist to build “Christian Kingdom” in the absence of the lord and forcefully sending soldiers to Hyuga.

By taking a place in Hyuga which is the country where “The Goddess Descended to Earth”, the full scale confrontation between 40000 Shimazu’s army and 50000 Otomo forces are drawing near.

Hizen lies in the west side of north Kyushu, in the vast country that stretches from north to south which is equal to present day Nagasaki and Saga prefecture, there

is a lot of peninsulas and islands inside the country. Therefore, a strong and unified daimyo doesn't exist in Hizen, many local people, powerful clans and pirates were holding on their own respective stronghold and many of those people are subordinate of the conqueror of 6 countries of Kyushu, Otomo Sorin.

Omura Sumitada who is the first ever Christian Daimyo of Japan, offered Nagasaki harbor to Dominus association and obtain millions of profits with the Namban. He has relationship with the missionary Gaspard, as opposed for being subordinate to indecisive and recently turned Christian Daimyo, Otomo Sorin.

In addition, Arima Harunobu who own Ariake sea that separates and is located between Shimabara peninsula and Higo, is an ardent Christians Daimyo.

At Hirado of north Hizen which is close to Tsushima, the pirate group "Matsuura Faction" held their stronghold and in charge in the groove area of Hizen. Matsuura faction is strongly independence minded and aren't a complete subordinate to Otomo clan.

But in there, there is a "Supreme Lord" who tries to unify and held down the local people of Hizen by military power. The lord of Saga castle, Ryuzoji Takanobu.

The owner of well-trained body with powerful physique.

The Ryuzoji clan. It's a very distinguished clan of Kyushu that has a family pedigree as the vassal of Shoni clan. Since his infancy, Takanobu was suspected by other for the rebellion against Shoni clan and many of his clansmen were executed. The remnant of Ryuzoji clan including Takanobu was forced to exile to Yanagawa castle of the neighboring country Chikugo. With a sense of suspicion and revenge along with the will to survive in the world of Shura through usurpation, Takanobu awakened to a principle of unification through military force at the time he reached manhood and inherit his birthright, and he repeated the bloody battle of unmatched brutality and conspiracy and achieved his revenge.

He destroyed the military commander who killed his whole clan by the order of the master's clan and recapture Saga castle. He conquered the master residence which

is his clan nemesis, overthrowing Shoni clan and emerged as the greatest power among the locals of Hizen.

But for Ryuzoji clan who plan on further influence expansion, there is an old enemy who could be said as a nuisance, that is Otomo Sorin of Bungo.

At first, Takanobu join with Ouchi clan who is the ruler of Chugoku district, after Ouchi clan perish, he join with Mori clan, wanting to expel all reserved princess daimyo from all of Kyushu as a supreme ruler and he keep on fighting.

But Sorin who herself is a reserved person who own one of the mightiest national power that is Otomo clan, furthermore, with veteran generals who mastered the way of Shura like Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun gathered there, its difficult to take it down. When Sorin's greatest archnemesis Mori Motonari die at last and Mori clan withdraw from Kyushu entirely, the Otomo army launched invasion on Ryuzoji clan Hizen all at once. The whole Otomo army which has repeled their rival Mori clan begun a decisive "Battle of Imayama" against Ryuzoji clan which has lost its support. Because Mori army left Kyushu, the Ruzoji clan tasted a hopeless hard fight and their Saga castle was surrounded by the overwhelmingly large force of Otomo clan. But, Takanobu who didn't solely trust on his retainers, after appointing his step sister – Nabeshima Naoshige as his right hand man to stake all on a night raid, they defeated the supreme commander of Otomo army- Otomo Chikasada and Ryuzoji clan avoids extinction.

The Nabeshima clan held a whole clan of powerful Shinobi called Hagakure-Shinobi squad under their arm. In Kyushu, where the violent battle faction settles all things in battles, Shinobi are despised and their value is lacking. Takanobu's Imouto – Nabeshima Naoshige let Hagakure-Shinobi squad to cast away their honor, single handedly overtake the foresight for Ryuzoji clan strategy and daringly played an active role on the field.

In contrast of Takanobu who boasted a large body like a giant, Nabeshima Naoshige was a princess general who is like a flower. However unlike Takanobu who doesn't try to thoroughly conceal his feeling when he is enraged, in contrast Nabeshima Naoshige has never changed her complexion for one bit when brutally and

earnestly carry out Takanobu's merciless massacre order. The vassal group of Ryuzoji clan fears her.

The day when the decisive battle between Otomo army and Shimazu army was drawing near – in the tea room of Saga castle, Ryuzoji Takanobu and Nabeshima Naoshige held a tea ceremony in absolute secrecy and exchanged a confidential talk.

*“my Imotou. In my Ryuzoji kingdom. Only this Ryuzoji Takanobu is the only one that should be worshipped by the population as god! Do not forgive the pagan god. All of the Christians that has cut deep inside Saga, make them shoulder that cross and make them walk up the hill, throw stone into that cross and let them die slowly. Do not kill them immediately. Grieve that eli eli lama sabachthani, I let them all die after they curse that Deus who continues to remain silent. The weak which cling into illusion of a god inside their head which doesn't exist at all, doesn't have any value to exist in my Ryuzoji kingdom! Fuha, fuha, fuhahahahaha!”*

*“I understand, Oni-sama. But.....if I killed the Christians too flashily, the possibility that Omura Sumitada and Matsuura faction who behaves themselves in fear of Ryuzoji military power would rebel, will be increased. If the people revolted against us, I fear that the invasion to Higo will be difficult”*

*“there is no problem, my Imotou. I have taken babies from their family as hostage. Kill them when they disobey you. being indifferent to treachery and betrayal is not permitted. Even if they are women or children, everyone know to kill the hostage mercilessly. Afterall, Omura clan is nothing but an incompetent and effeminate half merchant who make money by namban trade. As for Matsuura faction, you take away namban merchants and the other from Nagasaki, it will leave Hirado and loses its right to namban trade. They cannot oppose our proud and absolute military power”*

*“everything is within Oni-sama's mind”* Nabeshima Naoshige nodded without changing her expression for one bit. *“it is the decisive battle between Otomo Sorin and Shimazu 4 sisters”* she opened up a map of Kyushu, the expected battle around Hyuga is about to started.



Ryuzoji clan is a keen and earnest subordinate to Otomo clan. But for the supreme ruler Takanobu, there is no loyalty to Sorin.

Takanobu believes that all Shura beside himself is a lowly servants. They aren't even worth their life. the whole Kyushu will be subjugated eventually. He will grasped all authority about life and death in Kyushu entirely. There isn't any intention to be yearned by the vassals at all. Ryuzoji clan was loyal to Shoni clan, and they were almost exterminated. A warriors loyal hearts is always hypocritical. Therefore, he must dominate them by fear.

The only exception is his Imoutou, Nabeshima Naoshige.

(as long as I have my Imoutou, then I am fine. Everyone else is an enemy)

Takanobu and Nabeshima Naoshige would gradually exterminate hostile power in Hizen while showing allegiance as a foolish subordinate to Otomo Sorin. They have been earnestly waiting for this chance.

As soon as a rip happened inside Otomo army, the Ryuzoji clan will declare their independency and reveal their ambition to suppress Kyushu. That is the plan of the Ani and the Imouto.

*"Oni-sama. Otomo main force led by Otomo Sorin built a Christian town called Shiga in Hyuga, they will move south and take Taka castle thorough Hyuga highway. On the other hands, a separate Otomo army from Bungo march to Hyuga through the mountain. Takachiho has been seized, and seem to be running through the highway to seize Taka castle. Because they will have to march through the mountain, it consist of small numbered elite. The leader is probably Gaspard. Also, Gaspard is accompanied by Frois to avoid complete destruction of Shinto shrine and Buddhist temples"*

*"how foolish. Sorin doesn't understand the steepness of the mountain of Kyushu that separates Bungo and Hyuga. Besides its impossible for the namban who doesn't understand the feels about the place. A detached force aren't enough for a decisive battle in Taka castle"*

*“nevertheless, Otomo main force is 50000 men strong, Oni-sama. Taka castle that the Shimazu are protecting is only 500. Including the reserve army, its 40000”*

Takanobu remembered the battle of Imayama.

At that time, Otomo army that surround Saga castle was also an overwhelming forces that numbered around 50000 or 60000. The troops at Saga castle is only 500 men strong. Even though Takanobu boast himself as the supreme ruler, a frontal decisive battle is impossible due to the difference in military power.

Furthermore, in the center of the besieging army, there is the “ Raijin ” Tachibana Dosetsu who is the symbol of bravery of Otomo clan. In this battle, Tachibana Dosetsu’s fortitude is dreadful. In spite of being struck by a lightning and having half of his body paralyzed, he step out from his palanquin and stood in front of the battlefield. *“anyone who is hesitant to step away from his palanquin should go away!”* shouting loudly and holding up his famous sword “Chidori” which has renamed “ Raikiri ”, he kicked around Ryuzoji clan Ashigaru even though he was seated on top of a palanquin.

*“Ryuzoji Takanobu, there is no escape! Surrender yourself to Otomo’s Hime-sama! This Raijin will throw out Chidori to bisect this large bear into two!”*

With this strong general, Tachibana Dosetsu who doesn’t fear death take over the command, even surprise attack will not work.

Ryuzoji Takanobu who possess absolute confidence with his own martial prowess, intent to bet every chance for a comeback by having a vigorous one on one combat with Dosetsu but he was obstructed by Dosetsu’s young partner Takahashi Shoun.

With a differences of age similar to between father and son, a master of lightning fast strike, and a strong general whose military fame resounded all over Kyushu as Gishou who is Dosetsu’s right hand man. Dosetsu is terribly short tempered but Shoun is cool headed. Although he is still young, Shoun who was wearing jet black Gyoujin-Tsutsumi headgear with its hull bended backward, looked terribly mature.

He was a military commander who was specialized in defense rather than offense of that time.

*“Oyaa-san. Its not like during the olden days of Suikoden. Nowadays, victory and defeat of battles are decided in one on one combat, despite how much time you spend in country of Shura. Oyaa-san, you can’t stand on earth with your own power anymore. Even if you are the Raijin, partaking in a single combat on top of a palanquin is disadvantageous. Namusan da zee”*

Water Margin

Good Heaven

*“eei. You are naïve!! Ryuzoji Takanobu is an owner of heinous nature, he will never serve Otomo! To prevent any worries in the future, I have no choice but to kill him!”*

*“to fight openly and square. Even if the highly prideful Takanobu wanted a one on one combat, Nabeshima will try to assassinate Oyaa-san. Be careful of Nabeshima’s Shinobi”*

For Dosetsu who doesn’t know when to retreat, Shoun watches over the field and calmly find a suitable time to retreat. For the commanders who unite the whole army, they could be said to be best combination.

The arrogant Takanobu and the calm Nabeshima Naoshige, they are also suitably compatible, for there is no such thing such as virtue in those two. Takanobu thinks all human being except his Imoutou as something like insect.

Eventually, the one on one combat wasn’t achieved.

In fact, Nabeshima Naoshige would earnestly assassinate Dosetsu if the one on one combat is accepted. She was plotting out a scheme without Takanobu’s permission. Shoun saw right through her and stopped Dosetsu.

And thus, the siege was in stalemate.

Most of the native of Hizen goes for Otomo clan, Omura and Arima also join the Otomo army as well. The forces in Saga castle numbered 5000 men. Furthermore, with Shimazu clan strangely and desperately defending Taka castle right now, a reserve army has come out of nowhere. The Tyrant Ryuzoji Takanobu, has made

too much enemy in his surroundings. By treating other like a lowlife and foolishly killing them, they would become an enemy. In contrast, Otomo Sorin is a reserved person, therefore she is lenient to the enemy. After she experience Shura in Kyushu, she is worried about rebellion many times. Tachibana Dosetsu and his right hand commander has been fighting to execute any general who rebelled, the Otomo clan, and thus barely keeping the Otomo clan. Because she is lenient that the Otomo forces has been expanding in number.

It was a despairing siege war where no one can see any reinforcement at all.

Even Takanobu is prepared for death.

Nabeshima Naoshige has always prepares a gravestone in regard of her destiny, *"we brother and sister have killed too many people. Perhaps this is the works of the dead's grudge. If I die, then at least I will die with Oni-sama"* and thus she conveyed her will.

However, Takanobu obtain a chance for a reversal.

Nabeshima Naoshige's Hagakure-Shinobi squad has brought an unbelievable information.

Like always, the timid Sorin Otomo did not participate in the siege of Saga castle, she waited at the rear while leading the main force.

Because the stalemate can no longer be endured, *"the young soldier boy Otomo Chikasada were given a portion of the main force"* and he was appointed as the supreme general for the army who has cut deep within the Saga castle.

Even if Sorin is known for being frightened by the tension of battle to the point that she wants to regurgitate, its still a story that is hard to believe. If they cannot endure the stalemate, if the main forces personally join together with Dosetsu, then Saga castle would easily falls. *"who on earth is this Otomo Chikasada, I have never heard such name before"* Takanobu didn't believe his ears.

His Imotou's words continue to make Takanobu even more surprised, and he is enraged at the next moment.



*“it seems to be a boy of Otomo clan somehow. Otomo Sorin take Chikasada as her “Otouto” of the main family, and intent to give the distinguished achievement of conquering Saga castle to make him a Daimyo of Hizen”*

*Damn Sorin! What do you think about Shuras of Kyushu is! At any rate you make the Raijin to bend his knees to this young boy who doesn't have any military fame! You are truly foolish Otomo Sorin! There is a difference between a festival with battles, that lunatic!*

*“to take the neck of Takanobu.....why aren't you takes the command personally? Why make an Otouto without any fighting experience to bear the full responsibility? That soft person!”*

Takanobu is an arrogant man who despise any person beside himself as something like worm or trash, with only his Imoutou, Naoshige as the special one. There is no one that can be trusted in this Kyushu of Shura. Whether it's a lord, vassals or the population, when its necessary, they will throw themselves in betrayal. Only one. Only his sister who won't betray him. If its like that, what human being that could be trusted in Kyushu of Shura, its only one's own siblings. If, the Imoutou Naoshige betray him as well, then it won't be possible to trust anyone from this world anymore, at that time the heart will be broken by anger and suspicion.

At one side, Otomo Sorin has a birth palce which are different from a small weak natives like Ryuzoji and with a different living condition. But that person, in spite of being the legitimate child of a distinguished Otomo clan, in spite of being the clan head, she didn't protect her Otouto and have no merit in time of danger. She is not trying to come out in the field, and again using her Otouto as a cannon fodder so that she can survive.

*“when Otomo Sorin fought Mori Motonari, it was true. That woman, she didn't sent any reinforcement to her true Otouto who is killed during the succession of birthright of Ouchi clan by Mori forces! Afterall she is weak willed and should have been disinherited from succeeding the family inheritance. The “  
Nikaikuzurenohen  
Strange 2nd floor collapse” happened, because both father and step mother and step-brother were all “conveniently” killed by the retainers. That woman is said to*

*be the ringleader of “Nikaikuzurenohen”. If that is true then Otomo Sorin is a parricide and if not then a brother killer!”*

*“calm down, Oni-sama. This is a golden opportunity. I shall made a raid during the night when that amateur Otomo Chikasada made a camp on top of the hill. I will leave alone all other military unit and rushes to Otomo Chikasada. If I take Sorin’s Otouto as a hostage, we should be able to make peace with favorable condition”*

Thus, Nabeshima Naoshige carried out a desperate night raid and captured Otomo Chikasada wonderfully.

However, *“wait! Don’t kill him! Use him as a hostage, Oni-sama!”* Takanobu who face Otomo Chikasada ignored her Imoutou’s restraining words. *“please spare my life! A-Aneue...”* he ordered one of Ryuzoji Shiten'O, Narimatsu Nobukatsu to behead Otomo Chikasada who cry and beg for his life and preserved him in salt and sent it back to Otomo Sorin.

Ryuzoji 4 Heavenly Kings

*“in spite of being the legitimate child, she didn’t protect her Otouto. On the contrary, she keeps hiding behind her Otouto. That weak willed older sister, who keep letting her Otouto die, damn Sorin”* terrible anger rouse Takanobu.

*“despite being in the country of Shura, Kysuhu, an older sister who can’t protect her Otouto isn’t worthy for living”*

Nabeshima Naoshige plan for a revival seemed to failed due to Takanobu’s erupted anger.

Otomo Chikasada’s head was sent to Sorin. On the contrary, a bloody battle of Saga castle which could also be called as a vengeance for one’s own Otouto didn’t erupted and instead ended the siege of Saga castle. An offer for reconciliation is sent to Ryuzoji clan.

Even though Ryuzoji clan prevailed in battle, the differences in military power between the two clans is overwhelming. Nabeshima Naoshige who handles the negotiation decided to make Ryuzoji clan as subordinate to Otomo clan.

However, on the contrary Takanobu *“when I murdered your Otouto, did you even lose any courage for a revenge? Damn you Otomo Sorin! Why aren’t you angry? Why won’t you kill more? At this rate, won’t Otomo Chikasada’s death will be meaningless? The only woman who is important to me is Naoshige! Certainly that princess general are more lenient in being subjugated!”* without abandoning his ambition to usurp the title of “Conqueror of Kyushu” promised that he will be a supreme ruler who is more cold blooded than Otomo Sorin.

That witch who calmly sacrifices her parent and Otouto for self-protection has no right to live in Kyushu.

Nabeshima Naoshige quietly whispered to Takanobu’s ear who is enraged when remembering about the battle of Imayama.

*“Oni-sama. Please don’t be mad for my sake. I will think of a plan so that you will become the supreme ruler of Kyushu”*

*“.....that’s right. I understand Otomo forces movement. 40000 Shimazu army and 50000 Otomo army which will clashed in Taka castle at Hyuga.....furthermore, from Otomo’s strategist Kuroda Kanbei whom I wary about Ryuzoji clan sneakiness, by using a private agreement will offer the Otomo’s territory – Buzen Nakatsu 12000 Koku after Otomo army triumphed against Shimazu army. Of course, it isn’t enough to believe that Kuroda Kanbei planned a malicious scheme, it is certain that Otomo clan who invites that namban missionary and strategist from Oda clan is in the middle of collapsing. We have to use this opportunity. If we miss this, the chance for independence will be lost”*

The country that Ryuzoji Takanobu truly want is Chikuzen. Because there is Hakata port. In order to obtain this Hakata port, Mori Motonari are also keep expanding battles against Otomo army.

*“Oni-sama. However, Otomo didn’t take out their whole army to Hyuga as well. There is Raijin Tachibana Dosetsu in Tachibanayama castle that overlooks Hakata port. In Iwaya castle, there is his partner, Takahashi Shoun. These two man made for a hard defense in Chikuzen. Of course, they stick together in response for a chance of Oni-sama betrayal”*

*"Iwaya castle is small, even if all of the soldiers gathered, it will only be about 800 men. However, a considerable amount of sacrifice is needed to kill that Shoun.....the problem is Tachibanayama castle, how much is the military power in there? If dosetsu lead a large and holing up inside the castle, Tachibanayama castle will not fall easily. That old general is a true hero whom even I acknowledge. It has nothing to do with the fact that half of his is paralyzed. The fighting spirit that guys released is dreadful. It won't stop driving soldier go crazy. If Dosetsu and Shoun lead the Shuras, they will become the soldiers of death"*

*"why such men like that is following a weak willed princess, "the witch who killed her brother" like Otomo Sorin? To be so devoted like that is incomprehensible"* Takanobu clicked his tongue. Although, Ryuzoji clan has assembled a strong vassals corps "Ryuzoji Shiten'O", if Dosetsu and Shoun were to be added as subordinate, then Shimazu clan isn't worth fearing.

*"now. with the whole power of Hagakure-Shinobi squad, I am doing my best to check Dosetsu's every movement. It will be revealed soon"*

*"I don't think those two is looking at Otomo Sorin's decline in silent either. Even though Sorin who has turned into Christians oppressed Usa Hachimanguu, right"*

*"since we don't know how to handle Chikuzen, let's postpone it for now. we attack Shimabara peninsula of south Hizen and conquer Arima clan. There is an option of taking over the Ariake ditch and goes to Higo by using the navy"*

*"umu. The Sagara clan of the south Higo is the subordinate of Shimazu clan. If I let Shimazu to advance north any further, they will invade Hizen. In that case, we should attack south Hizen and Higo earlier"*

*"Oni-sama. The native of north Higo.....many clans including Aso clan, has already been taken care of. Kai Soun are operating them"*

*"even though I have heard that he suffered grievous injury at Hibikinohara, that person is still as foolish as ever. To continue serving Aso clan who tried to kill him in battlefield"*



*“ara. Oni-sama, could it be that you will execute a vassal who like that? Nevertheless, the Ryuzoji Shiten’O are loyal to Oni-sama, myself as well”*

*“hmph. Only you who is my Imoutou are special. You are my Imoutou and not a vassals. There is no option of killing you when it comes to conquer the world by military force. A weak willed Ani who cannot protect his Imouto has no worth living in Kyushu”*

*“as expected from Oni-sama. But.....as for me, I might kill Oni-sama. There are times that a person’s heart could change dramatically. The more violent the heart is, the bigger the reverse that it would make”*

*“hmph. For that. If there is no one else has the caliber to become the supreme ruler of Kyushu.....at that time, you can do as you like. I will give Ryuzoji clan to you at anytime”*

*“.....it’s a joke, Oni-sama. Please don’t say it like that”*

Nabeshima Naoshige who became teary eyed embraced Takanobu’s arm. Naoshige never show her feeling in front of the retainers. Its different in this tea room where this two siblings can spend time without others interrupting.

*“but, even I advance east to Chikuzen or goes south to Shimabara and Higo, there is one castle that we must subjugate”* Takanobu muttered.

*“that is Yanagawa castle in Chikugo. To the west – Hizen, to the north – Chikuzen, to the east – Bungo, to the south – Higo. Yanagawa castle is a point that is equal for being the “navel” of Kita-Kyushu six countries. If we obtain Yanagawa castle and Ryuzoji army protect in complete control, we can send to troops to everywhere. On the contrary, if we don’t take Yanagawa castle, our strategy and tactics will be greatly restricted. Although she is the queen of six countries, Otomo Sorin who let it unattended without assuming full control of it is truly a foolish person beyond help”*

*“.....but in Yanagawa castle, there is Kamachi clan whom we owe a great debt of gratitude. Wasn’t Kamachi clan is the one who receive Oni-sama with chivalrous spirit and supporting you when Ryuzoji clan was betrayed by its master and went*

*to ruin and when the retainers rebelled when the young Oni-sama took over the family inheritance was banished to Hizen? Oni-sama was able to take back Saga castle because of Kamachi clan support”*

*“hmph. But Kamachi clan is a vassal to Otomo clan. During the battle of Imayama, they didn’t arrive to our side when our Saga castle is being surrounded. They are also participate in Hyuga battles at Otomo’s side”*

*“its impossible to take away Yanagawa castle, Oni-sama. Kamachi clan certainly displayed troops at Hyuga, but the current young head of the family, Kamachi Shigenami “I vowed loyalty to Otomo Sorin but I don’t have any interest in Christians kingdom” came back to Yanagawa castle with 2000 soldiers. Those who stayed at Hyuga, only 1000 old soldier that were being led by Shigenami’s Otouto along with his father – Muneyuki who is the late head of the clan who kept supporting Ryuzoji clan back then”*

*“hmph! The Ani who abandon his father and Otouto at the battlefield...he is a man who is unworthy to live” Takanobu’s forehead twitched and he raises his voice.*

*“we feels gratitude to Muneyuki. But to the youngster who left Muneyuki and his Otouto and came back to Yanagawa castle, we don’t have any gratitude or justice to him.....”*

*“Oni-sama. Stop. No matter if we live in Kyushu, if we betrayed Kamachi clan whom we owed a great gratitude, Ryuzoji clan will completely lose its trust. People who might betray Ryuzoji clan might appear as well. More than that Oni-sama, couldn’t you make stepsister Tamatsuru to marry Shigenami? The two clan can conclude an alliance through marriage”*

*“Tamatsuru, huh. That person is just a free piece. Just a little more than an Imouto who is welcomed as stepsister to establish persistent alliance”*

*“if we goes by that logic, then I’m not even your true Imoutou, Oni-sama. I.....am your stepsister right, Oni-sama?”*

Takanobu covered his face with both hands. He groaned like a wild beast. When the memories that he doesn't want to recall revives, Takanobu endures his rage in this way. If he doesn't endure it, his body will most likely be broken.

*".....no. its different. Even though she is the same stepsister, she is different from you Naoshige. Don't remind me of an unpleasant memory. We should've forgotten about that thing already! Each other does!"*

*"s-sorry, Oni-sama. But.....even if you fight against Kamachi clan, Yanagawa castle is a famous castle in the whole world. Its not even possible to lose even after 3 years. Even if we use the full power of Ryuzoji Shiten'O, even if we use full power of Hagakure-Shinobi squad"*

*".....hmp. its so. Ryuzoji and Kamachi clan are eternal sworn friend.....in that case, lets invite Shigenami to a noh play and party at Saga castle, my Imoutou"*

Nabeshima Naoshige guessed what her Oni-sama is plotting. After thinking about it *".....I understand Oni-sama. Everything is going according Oni-sama authority. I, Naoshige will carry out Oni-sama order faithfully"* she nodded and dropped her shoulder.

Behind Naoshige, a black cat make a cry *"nyaa"*. It was a voice like a crying human baby. Occasionally, when Naoshige received instruction from her brother to kill someone, the black cat that she keeps at anywhere will certainly appear and let out a cry.

*"Naoshige. Even more than now. even if I will be damned to hell for eternity. I will become the supreme ruler of Kyushu. I won't rely on politics like Sorin. Kyushu will be conquered by military power and I will become the supreme ruler without question! For that reason, no matter how much that my hand is dyed in human blood, I don't mind at all! No matter what the world said, no matter what the heart is saying, there won't be any speck of cloudiness in my Hadou no Jinsei, there won't be any regrets! Over the kingdom, Otomo Sorin at Mushiga who observe things like a "head" of a structure is but an illusion. On this real lands of Kyushu, I will build it.*

*That is the kingdom of Ryuzoji.....! Those who stand on my way to conquer Japan will be thoroughly executed!"*

How many times has he declared this? Takanobu's eyes who declare it in front of his Imoutou are filled with sublime anger and madness and with sadness to the extent that Naoshige couldn't look at him straight any longer.

...

...

...

Shimazu Iehisa who lead a vanguard of 1000 Shimazu troops of Satsuma Hayato, hurried to enter Taka castle which was built on top of the hill between Seto river-valley Tanisetogawa (present day – Kiriharagawa) and Takigawa (present day – Omarugawa).

Otomo army that advances to Mushiga, in this case will go over to south of Hyuga highway and cross over Mimigawa. Such sight is clear as day once one rushes over to Taka castle. Should the most important base in south Hyuga – Taka castle fall, Osumi will be just right in the corner of Hyuga.

*"Iehisa-sama!"*

*"You brought 1000 men! With this Taka castle can fight!"*

*"Come on, prepare the akumaki!"*

Because there is only 500 men in Taka castle, the arrival of Iehisa who is in charge with Shimazu's military affairs is most welcomed at the castle.

Among the Shimazu 4 sisters, Iehisa is still young and small. But she is already a Hidden Fishing Field genius in military affairs and strategy and it's already proved by "Tsuru no Buse" Drill and Extract which was carried out in battle of Kizakihara and started out "Ugachi Nuke" at Hibikinohara. Iehisa's popularity and evaluation has been rising among the Hayato people of Shimazu army. If Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro and genius of military art



– Shimazu Iehisa work together, there is no one in Kyushu can match these pair. The men are excited with Iehisa is around.

The envoy for peace to Otomo army is the man from the future, Sagara Yoshiharu. The one joining Sagara corps is Yoshiharu's "Nee-san" – Sagara Yoshihi – (Yoshiharu turned to Yoshihi) as the sibling duo that transcend space and time. They move together with Iehisa in order to go to Mushiga to negotiate peace.

*"Kanbei and Frois-chan has already goes ahead to Sorin. Once we enter Mushiga, we would be able to reconcile peace"*

*"I don't think it will go smoothly Yoshiharu. Whether its kingdom of god or kingdom of Sorin, Otomo Sorin who wished to build it in Hyuga will not stop subjugating Hyuga"*

*"is that right, Yoshihi?"*

*"hey!! Mind your manner as the Otouto by calling your Ane with honorific! Call my name as Yoshihi-Onesama! A few days ago Sagara clan are allied to Otomo clan, I have seen Otomo Sorin's face and become her acquaintance. Her distrust to her retainers and family is really troublesome. By building a kingdom that consist of herself and Christians who held the same belief as her at Hyuga, she intent to escape from those conflicts. Sorin cannot be said as a pure Christians. She is trying to make a kingdom where she won't be scared with the possibilities of the retainers and people rebelled against her"*

*"indeed, Yoshihi. You are familiar with Kyushu. Truly a vice general who I can depend on"*

*"its Onee-sama!!! I'm your Onee-chan right?!!"*

*"its awkward to call you Onee-chan so I will call you by your name"*

*".....is that so? Because a marriage cannot be given to Onee-chan and Otouto, I will become sad if you call me Onee-chan. Since you are a spoiled child, it can't be helped. Don't worry, your Onee-chan will protect you until you find a bride. Whether*

*sleeping together, having a bath together or making a baby together, every one of your wishes, this Onee-chan will keep you in company. Fufufu"*

*"your delusion is running out of control! How much brocon can my Yoshihi-Neesan really is. It can't be helped, I will call you nee-san now"*

*"nyaa. Sagara is truly being henpecked by his Ane! Want to eat some akumaki?"*

*"ooh. Let's eat. Oh, this is, lehisa! This is really delicious!"*

*"heh heh heh. Open up the akumaki as much as you like. As for the food. Since I have made much, eat it! This opened one is cheery blossom akumaki! This one is in green tea flavor!"*

*"o-ooooh, this one is good! lehisa. Perhaps your specialty is cooking <sup>Japanese Pastry</sup> Wagashi cuisine!"*

*"I-I have been training in homemaking as part of my bride training. Its because my babysitter Niiro Musashi-dono is well informed in dishes, so.....but Sagara, don't skip the meat stew for the cakes. Satsuma specialty is the pork bowl, as for Hyuga it's the chicken. On the way to Mushiga I have caught two chicken and brought it into the pot"*

*"Hyuga's local chicken.....gulp.....its delicious.....this <sup>Grilled Chicken</sup> Yakitori is also good! lehisa, you will become a good bride in the future!"*

*"hehe. To conquer a man is through his stomach. Musashi-dono, what you are saying is true"*

*".....kuh. I can't look down on this girl for entertaining Yoshiharu's appetite. But what can you do with a rice cake seasoned with ash? Despite the condition of the country where the ashes from Sakurajima are keep falling endlessly. I still can't understand Satsuma's men palate"*

*"making food from bear's meat is foolish! Higo people cannot be said to be better either!"*

*“you insolent person. I am different from Tokuchiyo. I don’t eat bear!”*

From here to Mushiga, Yoshiharu, Yoshihi and Iehisa will be traveling in three people. Of course they are escorted with limited soldiers. Since in the end they are messenger for peace, they cannot bring an army.

The three people are watching over Hyuga plain at Taka castle watchtower.

From Taka castle to Mushiga, which sandwiched Mimigawa in Hyuga highway in straight line.

In contrast, Shimazu main forces led by the three sisters, Yoshihisa, Yoshihiro and Toshihisa are marching towards Sadowara castle to Taka castle. Their march is late due to unfortunate heavy rain. Only the 1000 men as the vanguard led by Iehisa that has arrived at Taka castle. Its in the situation where any reserve forces still hasn’t arrived.

*“the highways, plain and the two rivers. With the castle built between the rivers and dry riverbank in front of the castle. If its drawn in map, the topography is perfect for battles. Once it becomes a decisive battles, it will become a desperate battles to death of Taka castle that will remain in the history of japan.....right now at Honshuu, Nobuna and Juubei-chan are forced in the corner. There is no time to take a rest. I must go quickly to Mushiga”*

*“at this rate, the time left for Nobuna is rapidly decreasing. What is Kanbei doing?”*  
Yoshiharu grind his teeth hard, from behind Yoshihi gently hugged him with her slender arms.

*“fufu. Don’t panic Yoshiharu. In a dangerous state like this, you need be calm. Diplomacy isn’t possible with an empty stomach. If you don’t have any fundamental knowledge about Kyushu beforehand, the persuasion will go beyond one’s control. Look, Onee-chan will open an akumaki for you”*

*“Y-y-y-yoshihi-Neesan. T-t-t-this is a battlefield. D-d-d-don’t cling to my arm! Iehisa’s eyes is scary!”*

*“say what? its precisely that tomorrow you may die on battlefield, we must be in good terms as family in this limited time. Aren’t you the one who train my body to be like this? Why are you being so bashful now? don’t be reserved and fawn on your Onee-chan more. Your mind is always in constant excitement. Tonight, I will sleep together with you to calm you both mentally and physically”*

*“waa! I don’t train anything to your body! Because lehisa squinted her eyes, please stop saying things that will make misunderstanding! Don’t breath on my ears!”*

*“nyaa. Sagara Yoshihi. Using your position as the Ane, you are doing things as you please with Sagara. touching him all over and hugging him as much as you like. In future language this is called “<sup>Sexual Harrasment</sup> Seku Hara” this can’t be allowed” lehisa who sit cross legged despite being teary eyed, have begun cleaning her Tanegashima.*

*“oh, Shimazu lehisa. Do you want my Yoshiharu to be your husband that much? Then prostate yourself to me who is his Onee-san. Lick my feet. After that turn around 3 times and bark like a bear. That way, I will consider your wish”*

*“gununu. Even though you surrender to Shimazu clan, what’s with your saying? Should we have a rematch like in Kizakihara again?”*

*“hahaha. That is good too. At the present Sagara clan, there is a noble Ane who excels in ingenious scheme! A foolish but adorable Otouto! An Imouto who is bold and daring! It’s a wonderful trinity! Even with Shimazu 4 sisters as our enemy, I don’t feel like losing at all!”*

*“sorry, lehisa. For many years, in response of not being able to indulge her Imoutou Tokuchiyo, Yoshihi-Neesan is temporarily lost sights of herself due to being inexperienced with family love. She will calm down sooner or later. Probably”*

*“haa. Even Yoshihiro-Nee who is upright and devoted to military arts is in love with Sagara. Sagara is truly like Genji now. I am one of the young maiden who became Sagara’s victim now” lehisa pouted her small lips.*

*“fufufu. Because our Yoshiharu is too adorable, the Shimazu 4 sisters will collapse for competing over Yoshiharu sooner or later. Thus, Kyushu will become my Imoutou – Tokuchiyo’s possession”*

*“nyaa. When a middle aged woman awakened to sisterly love, it would be troublesome if she became maiden in love”*

*“I’m not a middle aged woman! As for now, I am older than you, but I am in the same generation with Tokuchiyo! Gununu. What rude things to say to your future mother-in-law! I have no second thought of sending Yoshiharu to you!”*

*“I don’t think nee-san can be a mother-in-law.....”* Yoshiharu wanted to insert tsukkomi, but both Yoshihi and Iehisa threatening gaze are too intense and he can’t say anything.

*“nyaa nyaa! If you are being that bossy toward the future daughter-in-law, Sagara will be hated! With that troublesome Ane’s evil intention, they will be disgusted!”*

*“.....d-don’t tell me? The only one to Yoshiharu is, tell me Yoshiharu!!! Who is more important to you, your Onee-chan or your bride? Don’t tell me that a bride is more important, siblings love is the foundation of japan’s culture, right Yoshiharu? Afterall this japan is born through repeated siblings love of Izanagi and Izanami”*

*“if I bring Yoshihi in front of Nobuna as it is, there will be war between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law in unthinkable scale”* Yoshiharu feels his mind is thoroughly exhausted.

*“.....well, that’s enough for ridiculing this country samurai Iehisa, this is a preparation before departing for negotiation with Otomo Sorin, Yoshiharu. Otomo Sorin is extremely distrustful with peoples. Its because of that distrust that she keep ripping apart Buddhism and Christianity in succession”*

Yoshihi handed out an opened akumaki and Iehisa quickly eat it *“amu amu”*.

*“nyaa! Sorin is the legitimate child of the prestigious Otomo family but her real mother died too soon. In addition, Sorin is a shy person since her childhood and had a frail body, she also hates large battles. She has no talent at all to become the*

*queen of the country of Shuras. Sorin's father considered to disinherit Sorin and prepared the immature Otouto Shioichimaru from his second wife to succeed the family inheritance"*

*"a dispute over the family inheritance between the Ane and Otouto? Between Nobuna and Nobuzumi, it was.....the chief retainer of Nobuzumi, Katsuie who reluctantly lead the soldiers and fought the battle of Ino. If I didn't come to Owari during the Sengoku era, Nobuna was destined to assassinate Nobuzumi for the sake of Owari unification"*

*"Sagara subdued that with love! You truly are a man!"*lehisal laughed delightfully.

*"I am just a common meddlesome person. I was originally an only child, I had no siblings. When I saw their appearance, I become sad"* Yoshiharu scratched the tip of his nose.

*"Yoshiharu. It's a common thing samurai warrior compete with the siblings over the family inheritance. Especially in country of Shuras – Kyushu. A dispute over the family inheritance easily developed during the course of your life. in Sagara clan, we avoids the future where Tokuchiyo and I kill each other since grandfather use his wits to expel Tokuchiyo and thus she was born in Yatsushiro mountain. But it wasn't the same with Otomo clan. The legitimate child Sorin was chased out from Otomo's Funai castle and moved out to Beppu hotspring. She became a fool who is waiting for her disinheritance"*

*"it was the same with Katsuchiyo-chan.....Takeda Shingen. Katsuchiyo-chan joined hand with her Imouto Nobushige who is also her opponent over the family inheritance to oppose the dispute between the siblings over the family inheritance by banishing her father Takeda Nobutora to Suruga"*

*"because her younger step-brother Shioichimaru who is also her opponent over the family inheritance was still an infant who cannot speak, it was impossible for Sorin to join hand with him. The timid Sorin quietly leaves Otomo's mansion and waiting the day of her disinheritance in Beppu hotspring. But with an irony of fate, "Nikaikuzurenohen" suddenly happened"*

*“the legitimate child succession of samurai family in Sengoku era. When Otomo Sorin was disinherited from succeeding the family, the rivalry between factions intensifies, particularly with the vassal factions. As such, when the vassals faction were defeated during the rivalry, they were afraid from being purged and stormed at Otomo’s mansion”*

*“Sorin’s father who was attacked by the rebels on the second floor, along with her enemy over the family inheritance, the younger step-brother Shioichimaru and her stepmother...was killed. Otomo Sorin ironically survived. Sorin’s father who lost Shioichimaru right before his eyes, deeply regretted such end of dispute over the family inheritance that himself has caused. At that time, the family inheritance of Otomo clan was conceded to Sorin who survives according the last will”*

*“thus, Otomo Sorin become the young queen who succeed Bungo. She turned to be the only one who profited from this rebellion drama. Therefore “the disinherited Sorin moved the vassals faction to massacre her father and Otouto” such rumor spread in Bungo” Yoshihi murmured it while frowning.*

*“r-really? Would a frail Otomo Sorin do such ting? Killing her parents and Otouto one by one, that is a cruel thing to do”*

*“if a strange rumor about a person were being spread, it will be exaggerated. Since all of the ringleaders were killed, the truth is permanently lost, Yoshiharu”*

While Yoshihi who leaned over to Yoshiharu’s shoulder, she said this.

*“.....even in this chaotic time, its still too sad. As expected, Sorin immersed herself with religion at that time”*

*“its just like that. However Yoshiharu, you can rest assured. This wise Onee-chan who is called the sun of Higo will always protect you. Sagara clan is a small family unlike Otomo clan. I who is living in small country has always being calculative, I am known for never being careless”*

Yoshihi is being fearful for losing her Otouto in the middle of fight against Otomo army. Her slender body were trembling little by little. Yoshiharu instinctively embrace Yoshihi’s shoulder hard.



(Nobuna was like that too. When Nobuna executed Nobuzumi according to the history, after that Nobuna falls in misanthropy and become Dai-Rokuten Maou. If I weren't summoned to Owari at that time.....)

Demon Lord of Sixth Heaven

On the contrary, if Yoshiharu was summoned to Bungo instead of Owari, Otomo Sorin life may turned into a totally different thing. even if that “*Nikaikuzurenohen*” was caused by Sorin herself, assuming that was an unanticipated accident.

(kingdom of Christians might not be needed)

But Yoshiharu has already met Nobuna. This world history lied on a single path.it cannot be cut.

*“the Ryuzoji clan who made Saga castle as their stronghold, are now being active for the ambition to unified all of Hizen. Hizen is a wide country. There the pirate group Matsuura faction in the north and in the south there is Omura clan at Nagasaki and Arima clan who made Shimabara peninsula as their stronghold. All of those 3 groups are in friendly relationship with Otomo but all of them are in great distress because of Ryuzoji’s oppression. Matsuura faction and Omura clan are already something like a follower to Ryuzoji clan. In Hizen all completely submitted to Ryuzoji clan might with the exception is Arima clan at Shimabara peninsula”*

lehis opened a map of whole Kyushu under her feet and ended the conclusion with high observation. lehis is a genius of strategy. She may have foreshadowed that Shimazu clan and Ryuzoji may clashed against each other sometimes soon. She might have already made a strategy in her head to defeat Ryuzoji clan.

*“Ryuzoji clan has submitted to Sorin’s national power and it’s a subordinate to Otomo clan. But they keep ignoring Sorin’s order and virtually are still an independence power. if Shimazu and Otomo clan fight a decisive battle at Taka castle, Ruzoji will gain profit as the third party and will steal away our castle one by one. I can’t predict whether they will capture Arima clan at Shimabara peninsula and subjugate all of Hizen or aiming at Hakata and strike directly to Chikuzen in Otomo’s territory. However, the brave generals of Otmo clan, Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun are staying behind at Chikuzen. They are keeping an eye on Ryuzoji”*

Yoshihi said.....the present head of Ryuzoji clan is Ryuzoji Takanobu. He is a person who takes pride with his outstanding huge and prowess as Shura in Kyushu. When he was young, he was betrayed by his master Shoni clan who murdered his father. Perhaps because he suffered unavoidable hardship as a fleeing warrior similar to a vagrant life, he became a terrible tyrant ruler who relentlessly kill all of his enemy and executes all traitors.

Ryuzoji Takanobu's stepsister – Nabeshima Naoshige is a skilled commander who support his reign of terror. She became stepsister to Takanobu because Takanobu's real mother remarried with Nabeshima Naoshige's father who is the chief retainer of Ryuzoji clan since Ryuzoji clan has fell into difficult situation. Ryuzoji clan were able to be revived because they succeeded in assuming Nabeshima clan support by having Takanobu's mother married to Nabeshima clan.

A wife of samurai marries with a vassal.

Originally, this is an act of a shameless person who shouldn't have been conducted in the world of samurai but Takanobu's mother did it daringly.

When he was young, Takanobu was a gentle boy then he changed into Shura and become inhuman lord without mercy. He mercilessly destroyed his former lord – Shoni clan. It is said that to repay the resolution of his mother self-sacrifice to her son, that he keep antagonizing and fighting against the conqueror of Kyushu – Otomo clan.

*"I am a Shura who born under the star that would become the supreme ruler of Kyushu. I will not die in tatami mats. When dying, I will ardently fall in the muddy battleground as a Shura. I will mercilessly killed any timid retainers who don't have the courage to support conquering the world through military force. My biggest enemy is an incompetence retainers. Such person is not worth keeping alive at Ryuzoji clan"* Ryuzoji Takanobu declared thus. No matter how much Otomo Sorin corners him with political maneuver, its impossible for a person with high pride to absolutely yield to political power. as such there is no other way to stop Takanobu than killing him at battlefield.

And then with the cold blooded princess general – Nabeshima Naoshige who commanded the strongest shinobi squad of Kyushu – Hagakure-Shinobi squad, she freely and faithfully carried out every outrageous order from her stepbrother without changing her expression.

Furthermore, there is Ryuzoji Shiten'O who are military commander of Shura with each one of them are Ikki-Tousen <sup>Matching Thousands</sup> serving under Takanobu. They are all fighting with extreme harshness on battlefield. They never take prisoner either. They will mercilessly kill every enemy at the battlefield who met their spears even if it a princess general. A weakling who falls on the battlefield doesn't have the qualification to live in Ryuzoji clan.

*"such military commander of Shura are holding an absurd ambition and keeping out his stronghold in Kyushu?"* Yoshiharu trembled. He trembled with excitement.

*".....unbelievable, the Shura of Kyushu during Sengoku era....."*

*"nyaa"* Iehisa nodded.

*"Sagara, I don't know what the princess general Otomo Sorin are worried about. If Sorin like Sagara and make you to be her Otouto and lover, that would be a serious matter. Because we the Shimazu 4 sisters has intimate relationship with Sagara, the previous incident end in a good laugh. Sorin lose her family one by one and she is extremely lonely to the extent of being a troublesome woman. princess general of that age must be handled gently. Please pay attention"*

*"fufufu. Someone wish to steal the Otouto of my Sagara clan without my permission? at that time, I will have to deal with this problem about Otomo Sorin"* Yoshihi floated a fearless smile.

*"do you have an assassination skills?"* Yoshiharu unconsciously asked, and *"no"* Yoshihi puffed her chest.

*"but if its about making a deadly curse, wouldn't it be possible? Yes, I will make all of my love toward my Otouto and turn it into malice and sent it away to Otomo Sorin's soul.....!"*

*“Yoshihi-Neesan.....in the future it would be called “Yandere” and I don’t recommend you doing that”*

At that time.

*“Sagara-shi. Your lecture about future language is difficult. There is a very serious matter!”*

Hachisuka Goemon who rushes from Mushiga to Taka castle popped her head out from the floorboard. She brought a report that beyond Yoshiharu’s imagination.

*“Kuroda-shi has been tempted by Gaspard and are virtually has rebelled. She has been chosen as the commander of Otomo force.....”*

*“nyaa nyaa?! A betrayal?!”*

*“hoo. When it comes to it, the capturing target is Taka castle, right?”*

*“w-whyyyyyyyyyyyyyy does Kanbei got chosen as the commander of the Otomo army? What kind of thing that make this situation??”*

Goemon bit her lips when she collected this report.

The heretical missionary Gaspard use clairvoyance to foresee the future by using the treasure called Platonic Solid and the result was clear.

Gaspard use clairvoyance and told that in the future, Kuroda Kanbei is rated as “second class”.

Kuroda Kanbei made an effort for world conquest as a strategist and has made many distinguished service. Because he is a sharp person that beyond people expectation, the Ruler (one who is not Oda Nobuna and Gaspard hasn’t told about who he is) said *“when I die, Kanbei Kuroda will steal the world”*. And thus he was ostracized. He is demoted from the central government politics and were given a small dominion – the Nakatsu 12000 Koku of Kyushu Buzen and were confined at Kyushu. Kanbei’s dream of “building a large boat and make my debut in the world” doesn’t come true and he is frightened of being purged at Nakatsu. In the end, to escape from being purged, he retires like a “flowing water” of which the meaning

of his name “Josui” came from. He inevitably spent the latter half of his life as something similar to a hermit with regret...

However, when the person who reign over the world who is keep ostracizing Kanbei died, a “great rebellion” occurred when the world are deciding its next ruler at Honshu.

After reaching old age, *“now that it come to this, I have no choice but to steal the world personally”* Kanbei set off to conquer Kyushu. He swept over Kyushu with ingenious and clever strategy by using only few men. In one month, he suppresses Kyushu and disembarked upon Honshu to plunder Mori’s territory and proceed to the capital...he gone out for the last gamble of his life. but the great rebellion at Honshu that should’ve dragged on further ended in only one day. Kanbei who knew this gave up everything and submit to the “last ruler” who won at Honshu. However the last ruler of the world also didn’t reward Kanbei’s great effort Kyushu. Kanbei were personally watched by the whole world, they were cautious of him.

Kanbei completely retires without having any chance of showing his talent as strategist brilliantly. He finished his life with regret.

Kanbei feels indignant over her second rate future and despaired, *“if it that’s the case, I suppress Kyushu right now. with that Simon’s future will be changed! By simply settles it in one battle, I will attack Honshu immediately and invade Mori’s territory. I will bring reinforcement to Oda Nobuna!”* and she suggested that.

From the start, Otomo Sorin who is her old friend were aware that Kanbei is a genius strategist. *“you should serve Sorin while serves under Oda clan at the same time”* and the matter about Buzen Nakatsu 12000 Koku were given to Kanbei. *“use it for your own convenience or project”* she were given certified liberty for Nakatsu. Also all of Otomo army which were entrusted to Gaspard are given to Kanbei.

Now, the Otomo army with Kuroda Kanbei as its strategist has begun their preparation to go south from Mushiga for a decisive battle with Shimazu clan....

*“nyaa. Is it true about Kuroda’s future, Sagara?”*

*“it surely aren’t a lie. But I should’ve already changed the future even since I come to Sengoku era. That Kanbei is a military commanders who can reign over the world but were demoted to Nakatsu, perhaps not...but Kanbei as a second rate strategist were always one step behind Hanbei, so she got impatient. Even at the conclusion of battle of Kizugawaguchi, Hanbei were given the spotlight. Kanbei is a great strategist. But as I would put it, she weren’t able to achieve her dream of showing “Kurokan Ichiryuu” to the whole world, she has no luck for that. Did Gaspard mind controlled her after taking advantage of her inferiority complex regarding her future?”*

*“this is bad Yoshiharu. If the famous strategist Kuroda Kanbei who commanded the naval battle against Mori army by using Tekkosen were to lead the Otomo army...it won’t be easy to overturn Otomo Sorin’s decision for starting the war. because Otomo army were split up between pro-chirtians and anti-shritians faction, they won’t get unified. But if Kanbei become the strategist along with a unified chain of commands, it won’t be just a simple army”*

*“if a messenger from Satsuma are coming out blindly to Mushiga now, they will be trapped by Kanbei and be held hostage. Its useless to take out lehisa. If any of the Shimazu 4 sisters make their appearance, they will only become a bait called a hostage for Kanbei. Be its Yoshihisa, Yoshihiro or Toshihisa, if their loved Imouto were to be captured, they won’t be able to resist. Kanbei won’t overlook such bait, and she will never return the hostage” Yoshihi sighed.*

lehisa nodded.

*“nyaa. Now that it come to this, I must protect Taka castle against Otomo army that has prepared going south. So then, will Sagara and Yoshihi go to Mushiga which is highly risky?”*

*“lehisa, prepare for a siege battle at Taka castle. But Yoshiharu are not an Otouto who will listen when we are going to stop him. I as his Onee-sama will accompany him. I have close relationship with Otomo Sorin since the past. If I persuade Sorin at the same time that Yoshiharu persuade Kanbei, we might be able to stop this war”*

*“that’s right. Now that Kanbei has turned into the bad guy, I have no choice but persuade Kanbei and return her to sanity. But that fellow Kanbei, did she not notice that she virtually rebelled against Oda clan when she receives territories from Sorin...what is happening to her, that fellow”*

*“muu? What happened to Konoe-sama who went to Mushiga on his own?”*

*“that reminds me, what happened? Since Kanbei fell into Gaspard’s control, Konoe-jiisan are also in danger. A greenhorn girl and a harsh old man won’t comprehend each other at Mushiga of Christians kingdom. On the contrary, that old man is the source of loyalism for Shimazu clan. He is going to be a powerful hostage to shake off Shimazu clan!”*

*Goemon who only show her face from the floor, “I will go back to Mushiga and bring Konoe-shi back immediately”*

*Her pupil shines red. “that Maro. Call him Fujiwara not Konoe. If you make a mistake in calling him, he will get mad” Yoshiharu chopped Goemon’s head with a wry smile.*

*“me and my Yoshihi-Neesan will immediately leave Taka castle too. We caertainly will arrive at Mushiga in one or two days. But with Goemon’s foot, it will be done in half of a day. I entrust Konoe-jiisan to her”*

*“its about time for a wild scoundrel of an envoy. Gaspard will use any trick to kill Sagara. Good luck”*

*Goemon disappear like a wind. At the same time “Kanbei.....if I had told her about the future before. She won’t be trapped by Gaspard. Damn it!” Yoshiharu perplexedly scratches his head.*

*“this is bad. Kanbei is spearheading the Otomo army! Once the battle start, will Shimazu use Tsuru no Buse? it is possible to outrun Otomo army and authority according to the historical fact, but Kanbei is the one who lead Otomo army. That fellow is a dangerous and extraordinary thing even for Shimazu clan”*



*“if men of Satsuma Hayato were to fight with all of their power, Shimazu clan would be able to win, but if Kuroda Kanbei see through Tsuru no Buse and prolonged the fight without moving, then Sagara’s lover.....Oda Nobuna will be in danger. In that case, I am sorry. Regardless of that, the match will decided in one day. If Kuroda Kanbei did not betray Oda Nobuna then it should be like this. Each side must decide this in a quick match”*

*“no, thinking that each side has equal war potential. That’s not the case!”*

If Yoshiharu remember correctly.

The battle for the most important place of south Hyuga - Taka castle happened twice.

In one glance, this battle of Taka castle of which Shimazu and Otomo army would clashed each other were commonly known as battle of Mimigawa. After this, the battle which should’ve started originally will become the coming battle.

In Taka castle, Shimazu Iehisa guarded it with 3000 soldiers. Otomo army should be able to seize Hyuga if they made Taka castle surrender. But they were hindered by long rain and their march is late. In addition, because the supreme commander Otomo Sorin stayed inside Mushiga and didn’t come out in front to Taka castle, the important area at the southern coast of Taka castle - <sup>Neshiro Hill</sup> Neshirosaka was able to be controlled by Shimazu Yoshihisa and Shimazu Yoshihiro earlier.

The absence of the clan head, Sorin. The hostility between pro-christians and anti-christians. Otomo army is numerous but its chain of commanding are in complete mayhem. In the end, they reach agreement at the council of war and every each one of them crosses the river on their own accord. Shimazu army were able to successfully carry out Tsuru no Buse.

Thus, Shimazu’s Tsuru no Buse triumphed. In the front, Shimazu Yoshihisa and Yoshihiro from Neshirosaka. In the back of Taka castle, Shimazu Iehisa appeared with resolution against death. The Otomo army was routed in pincer attack from the front and the back and take flight to their home at Bungo. But sadly, because

they escaped ahead of Mimigawa's high water, a large amount of drowned people appears at Mimigawa and the battle were known as battle of Mimigawa.

Yoshiharu, until he is informed by Goemon "*Kuroda-shi became the strategist for Otomo army*" was convinced that the battle will be like the battle of Mimigawa.

But as a matter of fact there is a second battle concerning about Taka castle.

That is, after the crushing defeat at battle of Mimigawa, under the pretense of saving Otomo Sorin who were driven into the corner, the Tenkabito - Toyotomi Hideyoshi led large army to further deep inside Kyushu, at this time, the battle of Neshirosaka occurred.

At this battle, Hideyoshi's Otouto – Toyotomi Hidenaga and the strategist –Kuroda Kanbei led a large army of 100000 soldiers to besiege Taka castle. Previously at the battle of Hetsugigawa, Shimazu forces use Tsuru no Buse to bring certain death and had completely annihilated Toyotomi's large army led by Sengoku Hidehisa. They intent to lure the enemy forces by using Taka castle which has defeated Otomo Sorin again. They intent to use Tsuru no Buse again. Hidenaga.....no, it was Kanbei who didn't fall helplessly like Sengoku Hidehisa before Shimazu's tactic. Kanbei snatch away the important spot at Neshirosaka earlier than Shimazu forces. He built a fortress that extended to all 51 spots and completely surrounded Taka castle. He adopted persistent method to wait for the Shimazu army to lose their fighting spirit and crumbled from within.

Since it need the enemy to cut deeply to their own position, Tsuru no Buse which is an ambush type tactic can't be used. Without bringing it close to Taka castle, Shimazu main army was at loss.

As the time passes, the people of Kyushu flinched over the might of Toyotomi's large army and one after another betrayed Shimazu clan and compromise with Toyotomi clan.....

Thus, to break Taka castle impregnable besiegement, Shimazu army were cornered to a position where they must stake all things for a surprise attack to steal the important places – Neshirosaka. Shimazu will fall if they fail at this battle. Along

with Shimazu army bloodcurdling fighting spirits, the Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro personally used his sword and made a fierce attack. Toyotomi Hidenaga who led Toyotomi's main force were seized by fear and remain standing without charging to the ground as the battle became fierce. It is said that the adjutant who were stopping Hidenaga to send reinforcement to Neshirosaka incurred Hideyoshi's wrath and were met with a capital punishment afterwards.

But of course, Kuroda Kanbei had calculated that Shimazu army would make a surprise attack once they were in a pinch. As a matter of fact, Hidenaga's army didn't have to move. If the main army led by Hidenaga were to reversely use Tsuru no Buse against Shimazu army at Neshirosaka, then it will be enough.

Kanbei led his army, flanking and charged at Shimazu army in a pincer attack.

Shimazu's surprise unit met crushing defeat and take flight.

Shimazu clan finally surrendered to Toyotomi army.

If this battle become "the battle of Neshirosaka" rather than "battle of Mimigawa"...?!

No, the army that Kanbei moved is different. The Toyotomi army that fight against Shimazu forces at the battle of Neshirosaka, have an exceptionally large amount of 100000 men. The veteran soldiers of Shimazu clan will lure Kanbei because of this overwhelming number of soldiers. But the Otomo army that participated in this battle is numbered approximately 50000 soldiers. Facing them is Shimazu army that numbered 40000 soldiers. Their fighting power is evenly match and perhaps Iehisa's Tsuru no Buse has already seen through by Kanbei. Shimazu's tactic that were used in the battle of Kizakihara would have been thoroughly investigated by Kanbei.

But, for the opposing Kanbei, there are not enough troops to win against the unparalleled and powerful Shimazu army. Kanbei has no military power to completely besiege Taka castle and reserve-bait the Shimazu army. At minimum, Kanbei need to capture Neshirosaka to make the tactic succeed. If Neshirosaka

can't be obtained, then the two forces would be in a stalemate across Taka castle which were built between the two rivers.

And probably, by the estimation about the current places of both sides, no matter how much Kanbei hastened their march, Shimazu army would always one step earlier in obtaining Neshirosaka.

Thus, in this battle, neither Otomo forces or Shimazu forces would meet a complete defeat.

A perfect stalemate.

Although Takeda Shingen and Uesugi Kenshin fought at battle of Kawanakajima for 5 times, it will always end in a same conclusion.

A perpetual cycle of endless repetition.

But if both Shimazu 4 sisters and Kanbei were to settle the match in one day for the sake of ending Oda Nobuna's forced stalemate at Honshu then it would result in the worst outcome.

In the same way as the 4<sup>th</sup> battle of Kawanakajima, almost all men from both armies are wounded and it end with mutual destruction without any clear victor or loser.....furthermore, since both sides use a large amount of namban's firearm such as cannons and Tanegashimas, the number of casualties will exceed Shingen and Kenshin's battle that use bow, cavalries and spear as its core. Because their power rivaled against each other, therefore, it would end in complete extermination of both main armies.

And then, the unhurt Ryuzoji army would take the chance and easily swept over Kyushu.

If Otomo army led by Kanbei make war with Shimazu.

Mori's advance would not be stopped and Oda Nobuna would be perfectly checkmated. Akechi Mitsuhide who stand alone at Tamba to stop Mori will be isolated as well.

Moreover, both Otomo and Shimazu will be destroyed by Ruzoji clan. Sengoku era of Kyushu will meet a different historical ending than the one that Yoshiharu know. Because Yoshiharu intervenes in it, Otomo Sorin and Shimazu 4 sisters.....the merciless Ryuzoji Takanobu will execute the loser even if they are princess general.

There is no law that forbid executing princess general at Kyushu.

(I didn't realize such future. at last, lehis was able to work together with Toshihisa. The moment where lehis would be able to have peace with the rest of the 4 sisters, didn't last for even one day. And yet, because I appeared, history has taken a sharp direction. Its no joke. It has to be absolutely avoided. Even if I die at Kyushu and wasn't able to reunite with Nobuna anymore)

Yoshiharu whispered while holding lehis's small shoulder.

*"say, lehis. Even if Otomo army approaches Taka castle, please endure it without going to war until the last moment. If Otomo army led by Kanbei clashed against Shimazu army that has approximately equal military power, both Otomo and Shimazu clan will be destroyed by Ryuzoji clan. Both me and my Yoshihi-Neesan will prevent this decisive battle*

lehis sensed something at Yoshiharu's expression. She silently nod, and for an instant lightly kiss on Yoshiharu's cheek. Even if he has the nickname "dodgeball Yoshiharu", Yoshiharu weren't able to evade it.

*"-I-I-I-lehisaaa? W-w-w-whaat?"*

*"hehe. It's a charm. You mustn't lose your spirits Sagara"*

Yoshihi who caught unguarded, *"damn you, in the midst of this confusion.....you must perish!"* needless to say, directed her bloodlust to lehis. However, perhaps Yoshihi think that there is a possibility that Yoshiharu and lehis wouldn't be alive to meet each other again, *"hmp. I will overlook it only this time"* and permitted it. Since Kanbei has become strategist for Sorin, the chance that Yoshiharu can stop Sorin is low. Shimazu army reinforcement is delayed. In case that Otomo army led by Kanbei capture Neshirosaka first, lehis as the supreme commander of Taka castle might make peace for the two armies by personally let herself be besieged

by Kanbei. Of course, there is no battle in Kyushu that would end without anyone dying. As the lord of Taka castle. Iehisa may be determined to perform seppuku as sacrifice as the seal of reconciliation for the sake of saving Yoshiharu from trouble.....that right, predicting who will survive at Kyushu of Sengoku era, who will die, no one could know.

Yoshihi was looking at the blue sky at the other side of Taka castle. Yoshiharu and Iehisa are also looking at the same blue sky with Yoshihi. In the midst of never-ending battle between people and unbelievable strife between Shuras, the sky of Hyuga is beautiful.

...

...

...

At Mushiga, Kuroda Kanbei who was appointed as the strategist of Otomo army, while rough snort “*mufu*”, are having an interview with the generals. Departure to the front will be delayed for one day. Kanbei who has grasped the structure of Hyuga suppression corps – Lily Crusade which are made by Otomo Sorin herself, *“at this rate, its hopeless! Otomo Sorin you lack ability to lead large army. it’s the same with the battle of Imayama where you only compensate with numbers. It can’t win against Shimazu army”* Kanbei has started talking and have carried out an interview to re-organize the structure of the army.

A flag of “Kurokan Ichiryuu” were installed inside the room. On the exclusive chair where only the strategist can sit, in front of Kanbei whose eyes brightened glaringly, soldiers are appearing one after another.

At first, Kanbei re-organize Otomo army that will pass through channel along Hyuga highway to capture Taka castle into 4 units.

The 20000 imperial guard that are led by Otomo Sorin herself. The Christians female soldiers that worship Sorin as its core, are taking camp at the rear.

As for the generals who led the imperial guards, is already been decided. The ultimate weapon of the Otomo army which takes pride in its unparalleled loyalty has been summoned.

The vanguard that stood in the front of Taka castle captivation, in 3 units each consisted of 10000 soldiers. A total amount of 30000 soldiers.

Kanbei herself led 10000 of these and have to entrust the remaining 20000 to an able generals. In addition, Kanbei's 10000 soldiers also need to be entrusted to an aide with an actual command. Kanbei herself, knew that its necessary for her to be the supreme commander after understanding the whole battlefield while standing on the frontlines.

As the result of this interview, generals who were mercilessly stripped away from their status appeared one after another.

*"Strategist-dono, thank you very much! Sorin-sama banzai banzai! The Crusade are the best! Hahaha! Entrust this war for the founding of Christians kingdom to this Tawara!"*

*"as for the name of mother who bore Jesus?"*

*"umm. Because Jesus is the incarnation of Dainichinyorai. His mother might be Benzaiten de-gozaimasu. Or was it Kichijoten"*

*"from now on, you are an Ashigaru"*

*"w-w-w-why??!!!"*

*"read the bible if you want to get taken by Sorin! You need effort to make flattery without errors! A coarse flatterer like you would run away from the battle at full speed once the war situation turns worse"*

First, Tawara Shonin who was following Sorin despite belonging to anti-christians faction and entered the war was demoted.



*“uoooo! The faith of Shuras is certainly the Usa Hachiman-jin! This country, the Otomo clan, and the other as well! Surely divine punishment shall pass and leave you to ruin, oooooh! Now that it come to this, I, will become a demon to do suicide attack for the sake of the country!”*

*“a fanatic military commander like you, would go running recklessly on your own without obeying Simon’s strategy! At any rate, there is no command that can be entrusted by the vanguard unit if its going to be a suicide squad used for sacrificial pawn!”*

As for Shigetane Takita who had a premonition of Otomo army by this Crusade that held hostility against the gods of ancient Japan, while in half desperation, advocates a honorable death by charging recklessly to the battle field. He is demoted.

*“.....we will receive Buddha’s wrath for certain. Enough, its useless.....kuwabara kuwabara”*

*“if you are afraid of their wrath, then appease their wrath after the battle ends!”*

Saeki Souten who was already shivering from despair before fighting were also demoted.

They, who has been decided that during the historical battle of Mimigawa, they would commit an act that marked them as a war criminals, are demoted from the seat of commander by Kanbei’s judgement.

However, Gaspard didn’t tell the details of battle of Mimigawa to Kanbei.

Kanbei who only told that she will be reduced as a second rate in the future, didn’t know the future about the battle of Mimigawa. Kanbei herself simply removes anyone from the position of commander who can’t obey her command.

In most cases, if there is a chance that a large of this scale were to collapse, it was caused by the violation of orders by the commander who fight in the front.

The Otomo army has more number than Shimazu army, but it’s a mish-mashed of soldiers from 6 different countries. Furthermore, the one who stand atop the army, the Raijin – Tachibana Dosetsu and his partner Takahashi Shoun are absent.

Furthermore, because the Crusade goal is to build the kingdom of god, many of the vassals doesn't care about power. it's a complicated battle.

The chain of command is in disorder, its noticeable even without being foretold by Gaspard.

Therefore, firstly Kanbei removed people who are a fanatic about the their faith towards the Crusade and Buddha from the seat of commander. A person who feared the wrath of gods and Buddha or possessed by the dream of establishing a country of namban's god will affect those who are led by them. If they can't be a realist, they wouldn't be able to fight Shimazu clan in the country of Shuras. Tawara Shonin are a realist who doesn't have any faith towards any religious. He is a man who is servile to Sorin for the sake of his own goal. Since there will be a chance that he will ignore the state of the war, he was removed.

In regard of Kanbei's coercive voice filled with complaint, there are 3 capable men that Kanbei choose from the interview.

*"from what I see, a sign of river blood is in Otomo's army sky. Its ominous. I can't prevent it with my life"*

After being robbed from the position of strategist by Gaspard, he is turned under the dust by Kanbei and named "Otomo's 3<sup>rd</sup> strategist". He is the unfortunate strategist of Otomo clan – Tsunokuma Sekisou. He matured while enduring a series of misfortunate and he didn't abandon his loyalty to Otomo clan. He protested to Sorin *"there is no moral nor reasons in this crusade"* but she didn't comply. Nevertheless, he burn up a large number of his strategy books and entered the war and prepare to risk his life to protect Sorin in the battlefield.

*"splendid Tsunokuma Sekisou. Simon is lenient to ill-lucked and clever strategist! I appoint you as Simon's vice strategist! You should lead 10000 soldiers that Simon's lead!"*

*"I certainly will. Kanbei-dono also knew that we can't win this losing battle. Leave this to me. But"*

*"but?"*

*“generally speaking, in regard of Mushiga, you must be careful about recklessly remodeling Hyuga to a country of god. This is involving the morale of the whole Otomo army. the destruction of Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple will scare the soldier and it will invite the sky of bloody river to happened”*

*“mufu. Simon is a strategist. I became a Christian because I am interested in namban’s science and cultures. I don’t bring faith to the battlefield! Are you concerned that the problem regarding the faiths will split the Otomo clan into two?”*

*“I am also a strategist. But, I am simply thinking about winning the war. I only lamenting that this act would lower the soldiers morale at this time”*

*“you are indeed a strategist! And Simon’s ambition is to win the decisive battle against Shimazu army and let the flag of Kurokan Ichiryuu flutter all around the world! I accepted your admonition. I add Frois as a watchdog to find fault of Gaspard’s reckless destruction of the shrines and temples!”*

*“Frois-dono will become the deterrent. This is a virtually impossible good luck. Otomo clan could be saved. Uhh.....”*

*“I will certainly win against Shimazu army”* Tsunokuma Sekisou was overcome with emotion and moved to tears.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> person.

*“.....I left Yanagawa castle. The family inheritance of Kamachi clan has been obtained by the eldest son. I will chip this old body of mine to fight for the sake of Otomo clan princess”*

*“this clan shouldn’t be concerned with Christians crusade”* the legitimate heir who insisted on sending troops during the march – Shigenami parted away from them. To fulfill their loyalty towards Otomo clan, from Chikugo – it was the old general Kamachi Muneyuki that rushes from Yanagawa castle. Kamachi Muneyuki are notorious as Righteous Warrior Gishou . Once, he helped Ryuzoji Takanobu twice through his chivalrous spirit. As a result, later on Muneyuki deeply regrets for being related with the tragedy that Sorin lost her Otouto at battle of Imayama against Ryuzoji

Takanobu, it is said that he is prepared to die a noble death at Taka castle battleground.

*“it is said that the eldest son returned to Yanagawa castle. Was it alright that 2000 soldiers returned to Yanagawa castle. This old man only led 1000 soldiers. Mufu”*

*“strategist-dono. If you suspected that I and the eldest son are conspiring with the other clan for the sake of Kamachi clan’s survival, then you may cut off my neck”*

*“fumu. I understand. Then among the 30000 vanguard soldiers, 10000 shall be given for you old man. fight with your heart’s content”*

*“you want me an outsider to be the vanguard? Moreover, giving me an army of 10000 men strong”*

*“Simon is an outsider too, its no problem. There is no such thing as an outsider, clansmen or a retainers in a severe battle at Kyushu! The things that are needed for victory, are too follow the strategist’s instruction and to give away your life at any time like a Shura! I can see those resolution within yourself, old man and Tsunokuma Sekisou!”*

*“.....I understand! If that’s the case, then this Kamachi Muneyuki will fight for the sake of master’s honor. Let’s do this for the sake of justice!”*

in Kanbei’s personal strategy, she wanted to gather all the military forces in Yanagawa castle in Chikugo completely on their way to Mushiga but Muneyuki’s eldest son has return back to Yanagawa castle with 2000 soldiers. Muneyuki doesn’t two timing them. By looking at Muneyuki’s attitude and expression, she understood it immediately. But, any miscalculation of Kanbei’s part would cause a failure. However, as for any strategist, it doesn’t mean that they should aim for 100% success.

As for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person.

*“.....within sunrise, the Shimazu army as the enemy and the Crusade who build the Christians kingdom. This is a reckless battle”*

The great commander who guarded the Dazaifu in Chikuzen – the biological Ane of Takahashi Shoun – Yoshihiro Shigenobu. During the war against Mori forces, she is a militaristic princess of Shuras that doesn't step back during the fierce battle against Kikkawa Motoharu. Having a personality like Tachibana Dosetsu who is her Otouto Takahashi Shoun's rival and partner, she is a loyal person. Though she is unsociable, she is a princess general whom one can put their trust.

*"umu. This is certainly reckless. Therefore the strategy will be a reckless one as well. The 10000 soldiers will be given to you, Yoshihiro Shigenobu!"*

*".....I who has been entrusted to led the personal guards, has been given the honor to led the vanguard army? Otomo clan is a state that has troublesome hierarchy within their retainers rank. There some commanders with lower rank than me. It would make hard feeling if I were to make such personnel affairs"*

*"in that case, Simon understand! If its true that battles could be won through ranks, then chaotic time wouldn't have come to japan! Simon doesn't give any honor! I am merely giving you a job to be done!"*

*".....strategist-dono is truly is a natural strategist but it seems that you are a person who is incapable of being successful in life. However, what would you do to the 20000 personal guard that are led by the master – Sorin-sama? With me leading the vanguards army and strategist-dono herself leading the vanguard as well, then Sorin-sama would have to led the soldiers on her own. Up until now, Sorin-sama is a person who doesn't have any experience of leading an army in actual battleground and war"*

*"no problem. Yoshihiro Shigenobu, I select your nephew as the supreme commander for the personal guards"*

*".....his opponent on his first battle is against Shimazu army. His abilities as a Shura is guaranteed, but he has no actual fighting experience. If he is overwhelmed by the spirit of Oni-Shimazu, it would be a serious matter"*

*“in Simon’s strategy, the personal guards doesn’t need to come out in the front. Only the 30000 vanguards army that will do the fighting. The personal guards at the back only need to take a fighting stance. There is no problem. Fufufu”*

Thus, the commander who led the personal guards under Sorin’s direct supervision and the commanders that led the vanguards army were all changed at the last moment by Kanbei’s decision or dictatorship.

*“.....hmph. Although I have incurred many general’s ill will very much, such thing will be meaningless if they were to be defeated. I have to win. I will discard all feelings and will offer all of my ingenuity as a strategist”*

Kanbei who has finished the interview at terrifying speed and finished the work for reorganizing of the army some and sat at the strategist-only seat.

Kanbei will surely invite enmity from many generals that she demoted, *“this whole body is a strategist”* because of that it will be satisfactorily if the battles is won. Because she is a girl, she doesn’t think about the consequences. Especially that this time Kanbei decided to disobeyed Oda Nobuna’s order and led the Otomo army. she is invincible now and there is no fear. By all rights, she should’ve died without being able to use her talent to the fullest and while deviating slightly from the era without taking any lead on any great battle. If the destiny could be overturned at this way, it would be possible to gain the best moment as a strategist. There is no longer any fear within Kanbei already. Even if she lose the trust of Sagara Yoshiharu. Even if Oda Nobuna regrets of being betrayed by a talented person. Even if it means to sacrifice oneself for the sake of winning this war...

(Hanbei, how do you think...will you be angry? Or will you crying? Or is it...will you said *“that command is selfless, its relentless and there is no errors. Such is a strategist’s command like a flowing water”* praising Simon like that)

Such thinking is inevitable already now. at far away, Takenaka Hanbei is glaring with each other against Uesugi Kenshin at Hokuriku region.

(well, its unlikely to be alive and meet Hanbei anymore)

She unintentionally bit her lips in order to suppress her emotion. Its impossible for a strategist to show perfect ingenuity if they are being emotional.

Besides Kanbei, Gaspard stood quietly.

*“Don Simon. As for me, I will lead a separated forced to Takachiho, as per the strategist order. After having suppressed Takachiho, I will make a detour from the mountain and go to south and we will meet at Taka castle”*

*“sim. We don’t know what kind of unknown thing we would find at Takachiho, but all is alright if you discover a treasure tool. If a treasure tool is useful for a battle, it should be saved, fufufu”*

*“you aren’t a person who depend on things like ancient treasure. You gain victory by using persistent human intelligence. That is your style”*

*“Sagara Yoshiharu who knew about Simon’s betrayal would have his expression changed and come to Mushiga. Of course, there is no use arguing and we will capture him right away. Don’t you want to meet him directly?”*

But *“such thing is not needed. For Sorin-sama, between me and Sagara Yoshiharu, between faith and love, which way that I should judge as capable of saving her. I want Sorin-sama to have an audience with him, just the two of them. It would be much more desirable for Sorin-sama if I take other action for a while”* Gaspard smiles.

*“that’s right. Let’s do that”* Kanbei smiled.

Kanbei though that it’s a wicked smiling face when gazing it on a hand mirror.

*“but, Don Simon. Would the detached forces that advances through the steep mountain path of Takachiho arrive at Taka castle on time?”*

*“fufu. Maintaining Takachiho by using few soldiers is the main purpose. Even if it doesn’t come in time, its not a problem”*

*“uuh.....Konoe-sama who tries to night crawling into Otomo-sama bedroom, was arrested by Tachibana Muneshige-sama. What should we do to him?”*



Louis Frois made a perplexed expression. With half-dead body *“release me de-ojaru!”* the Konoe Sakihisa who make a ruckus was pulled through his neck and brought to Kanbei’s room. The merciful Frois relentlessly pull Konoe’s body without any mercy. This seems is to be because to help Konoe who is literally making a pokopoko sound and a broken legs.

*“t-t-t-that young samurai Tachibana Muneshige, what is with him?! To be merciless to Maro who is a kampaku.....! Maro’s mastery with sword is like a baby to him.....he is a monster de-ojaru! He looks like a child but he is too strong de-ojaru!”*

*“so its actually Konoe? Since you dropped that black tooth and white face make-up, everyone didn’t recognize you. it seem that you want to pull Sorin through the path of love so that she would cancel this war. it doesn’t matter of much you master the sword, its impossible for you to kill the ultimate weapon of Otomo clan – Tachibana Muneshige. Besides, that person wouldn’t forgive even a kampaku in order to protect his lord”*

*“for Sorin-sama, faith and love are an important wish to rescue oneself. The world famous pictures book of ancient Yamato Imperial noble’s “Tale of Genji” cannot be used to entice Sorin-sama. For Sorin-sama, the romantic partner that can save her.....there is no one else but Sagara Yoshiharu who opened Amano-Iwato and came from the future”*

*“Gaspard. Its probably because you forbade love to Sorin. After the way of love is being sealed, she was driven to the path of belief. Ironically, this make Sagara Yoshiharu’ who opened Amano-Iwato became a big existence to Sorin”* Kanbei laughed while Gaspard calmly answered.

*“yes. No matter what you do, the cause and result would always go and counter each other Don Simon. Even if you personally modify it for your desired result, it will circulate around and round and reverse result would happen. The age of human, crossing the fate of human being. It’s a difficult thing...”*

*“.....Gaspard?”*

*“well then, I was about to go to Takachiho soon. Being monitored by Frois is a troublesome thing but that couldn’t be helped.....”*

*“Simon-san. Its not too late for you to go back to Oda clan, if Yoshiharu-san appears at Mushiga, please return Simon-san! Please! And, please don’t treat Konoe-sama too roughly! Ooh what a poor thing! w-well then!”*

Frois leave hastily with Gaspard. Konoe who was defeated by Tachibana Muneshige and brought to Kanbei’s feet was in stupor.

*“kuuh. I will kill you de-ojaru! Colluding with that strange namban, betraying Oda clan and even Sagara Yoshiharu whom you owe a great gratitude. I am truly amazed de-ojaru!”*

*“heh. When you take up that make-up, you are a handsome man. there is no chance that Otomo Sorin would fall in love with another man except Sagara Yoshiharu. If other princess general are ensnared, Simon’s strategy will be in disorder. Konoe Sakihisa, you are a valuable prisoner to threaten Shimazu clan. Simon will put a carefully made iron mask on you”*

*“i-i-iron mask?! Why are you giving me that?! Stop it!!”*

*“gachan!! This is an iron mask that were made by using namban’s knight as the reference. Your real face won’t be seen at all. U-wawawa! In battlefield we will use you who has been restrained by iron mask and chain as human shield. Fufufu”*

*“fogu, foguu”*

At this time, Goemon Hachisuka pop out her body from the ceiling like a hanging spider behind Kanbei’s back. A blade was drawn around Kanbei’s neck.

*“Kuroda-shi. If you kill Konoe and if at that time it would bring harm to Sagara-shi, then I will cut you down”*

*“what the? Goemon huh? So you come back. No matter how much you persuaded me, Simon will not stop until I win this battle and suppress the disturbance in Kyushu. The game to race against time with Shimazu clan has already started. Don’t bother”*

*"if you betray Sagara-shi who will arrive at Mushiga soon. Even if its Kuroda-shi.....your life will be forfeited."*

*"your voice is shaking. Sagara Yoshiharu wouldn't permit such thing. you will be fired if you kill Simon by your own decision. Fufufu"*

*"uniiko! so devious de-gozaru"*

*"you are a qualified person for this duty. Lend me a hand to complete my strategy. If Simon win, I will invade Mori's territory. By using the chance when Mori army and Oda army are continuing their battle over the capital, this Simon will steal Chugoku region from Mori clan. Fufufu. Its Kurokan Ichiryuu – (Kuroda Kanbei is Number One)"*

*"uniiko! Invading the west under this confusion and planning away to steal the whole country de-gozaru?!"*

*"it wouldn't take 1 month to suppress Chugoku region that has become empty. I'm not interested in seat of the one who reign over the whole country. Though it would able to notify the world a lot about the genius strategist Simon"*

*"what a thief de-gozaru! You are willing to throw away your loyalty to Oda clan and Sagara-shi de-gozaru??"*

*"since Sorin seems content with secluding herself within Mushiga, the Otomo clan is virtually belong to Simon already. If Kyushu and Chugoku are pacified, then it will become the world 3<sup>rd</sup> major power. Tohoku region. Oda clan. This Simon will divide the world into 3 parts. Oda Nobuna would die, but....."*

*"if you make war with a formidable enemy like Shimazu army, Kyushu will be in chaos. Attacking Mori clan is a dream within a dream de-gozaru!"*

*"I wonder about it. The result of my ambition would depend on your performance. Let Simon win. Simon doesn't belong to Oda clan anymore and I have become an independent power. but its good to confine Mori clan in place"*

*"uniiko! You are planning to manipulate me de-gozaru? I have been taken by your hand de-gozaru!"*

*“just listen”* Kanbei put her mouth close to Goemon’s ear and told her the order from the strategist command.

*“kuuh. Sending me to a dangerous situation.....what a selfish strategist de-gozaru. But, it couldn’t be helped huh de-gozaru”* Goemon sighed and disappeared.

...

...

...

Peerless of the West

## **Chapter 2 - Nishikoku Musou - Tachibana Muneshige**

Otomo Sorin started the last crusade in order to build kingdom of Christians at Hyuga. A place at Hyuga which has been set as Otomo army main headquarter is called “Mushiga” – (Musica).

Its not the kingdom of Otomo clan, rather it’s the kingdom of Otomo Sorin. Its an eternal kingdom which being put together by passionate Christians girl who will never betray her. It’s the long cherished dream of the princess generals and Sorin who is tired from the retainers betrayal, internal discord within the clan and endless rivalry against the foreign enemies.

After leaving Taka castle, Sagara Yoshiharu and Sagara Yoshihi who continued their forced march without taking any time to rest finally arrived at Mushiga at midnight. That place is a perfect namban town. Not only a cathedral but also a church. Every building that lined up is built using the namban style. There is a Hail Mary sung by female choirs group without being paused. Flags of Lily cross hanged over the roadway.

But the strange things is that throughout the whole town, jack o’lantern – which were pumpkin decorated as a lantern by carving out a mouth and eyes socket from it. Recently Sorin seems to be absorbed with a new vegetable from namban called

pumpkin. The orange helmet that the female soldiers guarding the town were also uniformly designed in human faced pumpkin style. There is also female soldiers who wear the human faced pumpkin that completely cover her head, making her eyesight bad and difficult to walk.

The complete lights and festivity reminds one of Azuchi's Bon festival. Sorin resembled Nobuna for having similar sense of beauty. But there something distorted there.

*"Yoshiharu. Mushiga looked just like a namban's capital. A uniformed townscape of namban's construction without any sight of Buddhist temples or Shinto shrines. It seem that the temples have been completely dismantled to be used as materials for the buildings. Sorin has built a country different from Japan"*

*"there is no complete westernized town in 21<sup>st</sup> century of Japan. its completely like an amusement park.....uuuh, that is Yoshihi-Neesan, this is not a complete town of Christians"*

*"then, what kind of town is it?"*

*"though its a town that the Christian build, its closer for being the town of ancient pagan European. That is the town of Halloween"*

*"hmp. Aren't the namban's religion is the Christianity?"*

*"at Europe, there was syncretic ancient local belief before their fight with the emerging Christianity. It's the same with Shinbutsu-Shugo that formerly established in Japan. Halloween itself, is a festival of an old animism that survive by blending with Christianity. Speaking of Japan.....its similar to Bon festival. This world is connected to the underworld. Each person is under supervision of ghost and witches. It's the days when the soul of dead return"*

Syncretism of Kami and Buddha

*"is that so.....be its Japan or namban. The foundation of a person's heart is the same"*

*"however, its the story of later times that pumpkin are being adopted in Halloween. Although, its certain that Otomo Sorin popularized the pumpkin imported from*

*namban to japan, Sorin herself shouldn't have heard any anecdotes about Halloween. Sorin may not see any differences between Christianity and ancient paganism in European. If Frois watched the scenery of this town full of ancient paganism flavors, she will surely faint"*

*"Gaspard himself seem to be suspected under heresy by Dominus association. He seems to be able to adapting himself to Sorin's likeness"*

*"but the gate is strictly guarded. "all except residents of Mushiga is prohibited and "Shimazu army are prohibited for coming closer". All the female soldiers repeatedly saying that.....it doesn't seem that we can pass through silently"*

*"should we go over the wall, Yoshiharu?"*

At any rate, if they want to have an audience with Sorin soon, they need to go pass through the wall...

*Tsuun-!*

A sudden arrow were repeatedly shot at Yoshiharu and Yoshihi

At a terrific speed.

*"uwaa?! That's dangerous. Yoshihi-Neesan!"*

*"heeey Yoshiharu! You want to protect your Ane while standing? Get away!"*

Yoshiharu quickly push away Yoshihi to squat down. Yoshihi's body is now out of range.

*"its alright! The time for the nicknamed Dodgeball Yoshiharu has come! I will avoid all of them!"*

And so by hanging one hand at the wall, he avoid a bunch of arrow that coming to him by swaying his torso flutteringly, but...

In the air, *gun-tsun-!*, the trajectory of the arrows bend in succession.

*"giyaaa?! The shoot is curved like a forked slide?! That's a lie right?!"*

*Dosu, dosu, dosu ,dosun~!*

*“Y-Yoshiharu?! What do you mean with Dodgeball Yoshiharu! All of them hit you right? You moron!”*

*“.....i-iyaa, its not that they hit us.....the archer seem to delicately removes the arrows/wedge on purpose. Right now my limbs and head stuck between large amount of arrows. I am stuck at the wall. It’s a miracle.....my special skill of dodging cannot be used at all.....eh, aree.....!”*

*“I am the one who shoot it. My deepest apology. Otomo army has already made preparation to fight against Shimazu army. they have departed at morning. Anyone are not allowed to enter Mushiga town without permission. please state your name”*

A handsome samurai boy with clear expression and posture with a tightly drawn bow make his gallant entrance in front of those two. *“I don’t like unnecessary killing”* his tone is polite yet Yoshiharu and Yoshihi were held by his firm expression.

*“isn’t he just a child?! You bastard, doing this to my Otouto!”*

*“Yoshihi-Neesan! That’s no good, this young samurai is a strong master of bow and sword!”*

Yoshiharu remove his limbs and head out from between the arrows and descended to the ground while holding on to Yoshihi’s sleeves.

Yoshiharu seem to recognize the helmet that the samurai boy was wearing.

In contrast of Date Masamune favorite crescent moon kabuto, it was decorated with full wheel inserted on top of its head “Oowanuki Torige Head Shaped Kabuto”.  
Large Wheel      Plume

*“Yoshihi-Neesan. This samurai boy, though he is still young, is a hero who cannot be rivaled by anyone other than Shimazu Yoshihiro or Kai Soun”*

*“hoo. This child is a Shura comparable to uncle Soun? You seem to know everything don’t you? as expected from Tokuchiyo’s offspring”*

*“uum, visitor-san? Do you know anything about me? Though I am a novice who just entered his first campaign, if you praise me like that, I-I will be embarrassed.....”*

This honest samurai boy. Yoshiharu whose fondness with women is comparable with Hashiba Hideyoshi, is unconsciously fascinated by his handsome.....or it could be said as extraordinary cuteness. Although he doesn't disguise himself as a girl, he emitted a strong aura of tomboyish girl. Yoshihi who immediately sensed Yoshiharu's subtle excitement *“Yoshiharu. Your Onee-chan will get angry if you run into that kind of hobby. You are the descendant of the prestigious Sagara clan which are full of glorious tradition. You must not become a hentai. If you are in such anguish until that degree, in that case I as your Onee-chan will crawl to your bedroom at night. I will calm you down”* came and whispered it to him. As for Yoshiharu (the sensitivity of Yoshihi-Neesan's “Onee-chan Sensor” is abnormal. What should I do.....things will be in chaos once I bring her in front of Nobuna) he broke in cold sweat.

Yoshiharu himself *“we were trying to cross over the wall, my bad. I am the commander in charge over Chugoku region of Oda clan. Sagara Yoshiharu. My official rank is Chikuzen-no-Kami. There is some complication that make me indebted to Shimazu clan right now but I come as diplomatic messenger from Oda clan. I wished to see Sorin”* make a self-introduction and now Yoshihi also introduces herself.

Because Yoshihi has high pride.....

*“.....I am the original lord of Hitoyoshi castle and the predecessor of Sagara clan. And right now are taking care of her disgraceful Otouto, I am the sun of Higo – Sagara Yoshihi. Although I accompanied my Otouto in order to fulfill the commands of the master, there is no way that I am Shimazu's errand dog!”*

*“rather than being humble, it seem that she intended to compete with Muneshige, she still being admirable. That's how Yoshihi-Neesan really is, huh.”* Yoshiharu thought so.

*“so that's how it is. U-uum, when I think about that the famous Sagara Yoshiharu-dono would appear in front of me, I-I have become nervous. I will introduce myself.*



*I am the new head of personal guards of Lily Crusade that serve our master Otomo Sorin-sama, I am Tachibana Muneshige”*

*“Tachibana Muneshige! I knew it, it just like what I thought! Yoshihi-Neesan, he is the stepson of the Raijin Tachibana Dosetsu. Because I wasn’t able to avoid his arrow, I can understand it. His bowmanship and sword skills are top-notch. Our Sagara family combo cannot rival him”*

*“is that true? His appearance is similar to a feminine girl”*

*“f-for the time being, I have obtained the <sup>License of Full Mastery</sup> Menkyo Kaiden of <sup>Art of Sword</sup> Taisha-Ryuu Kenjutsu.*

*I am also had obtained the Menkyo Kaiden of <sup>Arts of Archery</sup> Heki-Ryuu Kyujutsu. As well as Menkyo Kaiden of Kemari - Asukai-Ryuu Mari-Dou. But in fact this is my first battle. Menkyo Kaiden doesn’t mean anything in actual combat. The “Retreat at Kanegasaki” are counted as among many rising military exploits. I-in front of the legendary military commander Sagara Yoshiharu-dono, I am just a greenhorn..... I- I am so embarrassed”*

*“ugee. What on earth is this guy? isn’t he a literal perfect superman? Since I am weak from birth and poor in martial arts, I always face horrible sarcastic remarks but its strangely irritating no to hear any sarcasm since he is too modest. He is truly is a well-bred” Yoshihi frowned.*

*“I get it. Since it was said that Takahashi Shoun’s son is fiercely talented, the Raijin Tachibana Dosetsu forcefully asking Shoun to take the latter’s son to marry the former’s daughter and make him his stepson. So its this guy huh? But his looks like a girl.....T-this guy is, even though look like this, is already a m-married man? I-its impossible to imagine”*

*“m-my wife Ginchiyo is still 7 years old! I-I am still a greenhorn boy who still has a long way to go. I don’t know how to deal with my wife. Of course, I don’t have any experience of making children”*

*“what’s that? A 7 years old bride? Yoshiharu, isn’t this what they call as the soul of lolicon?”*

In Otomo clan, there two major generals who became the pillars for military affairs that substitutes Sorin who is weak to stand at the frontline.

Tachibana Dosetsu who is a veteran general who rides upon a palanquin on the battlefield. The loyal warrior who is the embodiment of valor of Otomo clan – the Raijin. He slice a lightning once and now has half of his body paralyzed. He miraculously survived and became a legend. A Shura who achieved victory at numerous battlefield. Otomo Sorin who is poor at fighting was able to become the queen of the six countries of Kyushu thanks to Tachibana Dosetsu's achievement. Dosetsu who held deep faith to Usa Hachiman opposed this reckless religious war and should've stayed at Tachibanayama castle now.

Another person is the lord of Homanzan castle and Iwaya castle who protect the Dazaifu of Chikuzen – Takahashi Shoun. The strongest partner and sword friend of Tachibana Dosetsu for his prideful fighting spirit and persistent loyalty. Although the age differences with the two are like father and son, he is a legendary Gishou who is not inferior to Dosetsu. Shoun should've stayed at the castle as well.

This Tachibana Muneshige is the biological child of the Gishou Takahashi Shoun. He is the husband of Tachibana Dosetsu's daughter Ginchiyo and welcomed as the noble stepson of Tachibana clan. He was trained at early age by the two most elite general – Shoun and Dosetsu to support the Otomo clan. He is the hybrid of elite Shura.

As far as Yoshiharu are aware of, there isn't any single flaw within his morality, martial prowess and personality. He is a samurai among samurai whose existence itself is considered as a cheat. The samurai of Sengoku era of japan called the "Last Perfect System" or "Ultimate System".

He is renowned as <sup>Peerless of Chinzei</sup> "*Chinzei Musou*" also known as <sup>Peerless of Western Country</sup> "*Nishikoku Musou*".

Its said that he has a discord with his wife Ginchiyo and a young waster who has zero vitality in growing up. Other than that there isn't any single flaw in him. He is a general of Sengoku era who boasted incredible talent and personality.

*“but that’s strange. In the history I know, Tachibana Muneshige shouldn’t have participated in this battle. Muneshige’s first battle still a long way to go. I also never heard about Muneshige converting into Christianity. Why are you participating in Lily Crusade?”*

*“yes. Both <sup>Stepfather</sup> Gifu-jo and <sup>Father</sup> Oyaji-dono lamented that there isn’t any geographical advantage, opportunity from the heaven or harmony between the people in this battle. Furthermore, our master has no experience to stand in front of the battlefield personally. Each of Shimazu 4 sisters are experienced in actual fighting and they all are in harmony. However, bot Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono are in dark and cannot move out from Chikuzen. It is to restrain sneaky movement from Ryuzoji Takanobu at Hizen. Therefore, even though I am a greenhorn, at the very least this Muneshige will become the office for the sake of master’s dream. Be it becoming the shield for defending master from the arrows or bullets of Shimazu, I have my determination when the circumstances need it”*

*“both Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono brought severe training to hardens my heart in order to eventually make me the brother-in-law of master. Its only natural that the Otouto fight for the sake of protecting his Ane”* Muneshige nodded. Although his eyes is calm, its shining brightly. There isn’t any speck of filth in his heart. He is a noble boy who is raised as a pure person.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu-dono has served as the rear guard for Oda Nobuna-sama’s sake at Kanegasaki as well as becoming a shield for Nobuna-sama at Tenno-ji. I as well, carried out loyalty for my master and am determined to sacrifice my life”*

*“w-w-well, Muneshige. I wasn’t born in a samurai family. If I had to say it then actually my loyalty to my master is something came out from my feeling as an individual. I am not a man who can be used as a role model for <sup>Code of Chivalry</sup> Bushido, right? In fact, it was a love relationship between the lord and the retainer. It was a foolish act of the retainer supplanting his lord which is considered as a taboo”*

*“I don’t have any knowledge in romance but.....Yoshiharu-dono love relationship with Nobuna-sama is the result of your selfless and loyal heart that you carried out.*

*Such deep trust is the reason why it exceed the taboo with Nobuna-sama. I as well, am making desperate efforts to be recognized as true Otouto for master"*

This Muneshige has no choice but to die fighting for the sake of Otomo clan in the future.....although the Otomo clan is a superpower, but internally, Sorin's admiration to Christianity made the clan to decline steadily. Muneshige was expected as the "Ultimate Weapon of Otomo clan" by his two father. He has been raised severely from his childhood. Yoshiharu sympathized with Muneshige's way of life. but such easy sympathy...would be considered rude for Muneshige who lived for the sake of loyalty.

*"but, why are you becoming an Otouto?"*

*"both Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono considered that for the sake of master who is poor at fighting and scared of war, an Otouto is need to directly command the Otomo army and serves as her sword on the battlefield. Therefore, I am tasked with that important role. For that reason, I have been spending everyday with severe training in life and death until now. even if I were to walk upon a stepping stone, I would still have to walk down that path. I took upon Gifu-jo's words upon my heart"*

*"eh? your heart? What kind of training is that? Well, good luck with that"*

On the other hand, Yoshihi's tongue is relentless.

*"Otomo Sorin's dream is, let alone a Christians kingdom, is a kingdom of pumpkin in japan which deviated from the faith of Christians? If I have to say it, since Sorin is tired of rebellion from the retainers and the death of her family, she tries to gather passionate believers who will never betray her and keep being a hikikomori at Hyuga. Sorin doesn't hold any prospect beyond that. For Sorin's personal flowery dream, is it worth for a loyal subject such as yourself to lose your life for? It is the result of being discreetly used by the ambition of that namban missionary Gaspard as usual"*

Yoshihi herself, in order to protect her only Imouto Tokuchiyo, has submitted her life to Kai Soun. Sorin's weakness that had led her Otouto to die in the past. Yoshihi who harbor a deep love for her family in her heart. There is something that Yoshihi

felt about the former's thinking. The prideful Yoshihi accepted her fate of being a subordinate to Shimazu clan, was done in order to rescue Yoshiharu. Not only that, wasn't it also because she found respect in the firm unity of Shimazu 4 sisters.

But Yoshiharu think that the weakness itself is not evil. Strength and weakness coexisted within human's heart. Yoshiharu as well. If he didn't meet Nobuna, Yoshiharu would have been scared of his fate at this Sengoku era and would've died at some place on the corner of the battlefields. Sorin is the opposite of Nobuna's strength. By the insane wheel of history, she fell into the dark fate of having to execute her biological Otouto. One could see from the outlook of the peculiar Mushiga town. Sorin was born as an artisan. She has talent in constructing towns. There is no quality of a soldier within her to fight at the field of Shura. That is the difference with Nobuna. Yoshiharu thought that it was a misfortune that Sorin succeed the Otomo clan of Kyushu which is the most prominent site of bloody battle during Sengoku era.

*"its presumptuous for a retainer to question his lord's dream. To fight and die for our lord is the greatest honor for the Shura of Otomo clan. Oyaji-dono has been taught everything about vanity from Gifu-jo.....any more than that is something that I don't know about, since I am still but a greenhorn"* although Muneshige was tilting his head, he still answered honestly.

*"as I thought, my lord will surely be defeated by Shimazu army, right? Yoshiharu-dono?"*

Muneshige is wrapped in countless pumpkin and while looking at the street of Mushiga with sorrowful gaze, he asked it to Yoshiharu.

*"if Kanbei and Shimazu 4 sisters are going to clash against each other with the current miserable military differences between the two army, victory or defeat cannot be decided easily. If at one point Tachibana Muneshige entered the war, the chance of victory will go slightly for the Otomo army but is probably still difficult to win. Muneshige is a renowned hero who carried the nickname "Nishikoku Musou" in the future. unfortunately, no else including Shimazu men of Satsuma Hayato except me know about Muneshige's military fame"*

*“if my Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono whose military fame were known through the whole nation of Kyushu are to participate in this war, then the condition of the war would also change. It’s a regrettable thing”*

*“it can’t be helped that Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun weren’t able to participate in this battle. At any rate, the existence of Ryuzoji Takanobu who will steal the hegemony of Kyushu once both sides are damaged and collapsed are the biggest problem. Those two brave generals are able to foresee that Ryuzoji Takanobu would immediately rebel once Otomo army collapses, that’s why they aren’t able to leave Chikuzen easily”*

*“Ryuzoji Takanobu are known to be a literal Oni in personality who aim to become the supreme ruler of Kyushu. But with the fact that the man from the future like are you are saying...in the future that you know, the last battle over the supremacy of Kyushu will be carried between Shimazu clan and Ryuzoji clan. This mean that our lord, at this battle...will fall from the seat of queen of 6 countries of Kyushu, right?.....”*

*“indeed, that’s why we as the messenger of negotiating peace are here to stop you from doing this battle. Me and Yoshihi are going to see Sorin”*

*“aren’t you praising Muneshige too much Yoshiharu? Between me and this boy who look like a girl, which one of us are more famous in the future?” Yoshihi sulked for being half ignored by Yoshiharu. “aah. Muneshige is about 10 times more famous than Yoshihi-Neesan” Yoshiharu let his tongue carelessly slip out. “what do you mean 10 times more than me? Don’t joke!! Can’t you pay more attention to your Onee-chan? You blockhead!!” the highly prideful Yoshihi pinched Yoshiharu’s cheek in fury.....”that is the truth, I’m telling you! an enthusiast of Sengoku game won’t lie! There is a magnificent battle about Tachibana Muneshige in Oda Nobunaga no Yabou. Its unfortunate that “The Battle of Hibikinohara” weren’t transformed as a characteristic event for Sagara Yoshihi and thus it has that much differences in popularity!” Yoshiharu pinched Yoshihi’s cheek in retort.*

*“fufu. In this chaotic time of Kyushu, this is the first time that I see such close brother and sister. How enviable. Would there be a time that there will be a siblings quarrel between me and master.....”*

Muneshige smiles wryly, at that time.

*“an opening~! Osuu!”*

While shouting, a young princess.....Tachibana Ginchiyo plunged to those three from the darkness.

And then.

*“tha-that’s no good you know! I am working right know, Ginchiyo-dono”*

At Muneshige’s stomach who lowered his eyebrow in troubled look,

*“Muneshige~! Take this~! Return the family inheritance~!”*

Doboo, she made a daring and ruthless head-butt.

Furthermore.

*“a covering attack~! Ginchiyo’s new servant Tocco has appeared! Attack Muneshige with your beak~!”*

*“koke~!”*

Ginchiyo seem to have kept a familiar. No, it was just a casual chicken. She started an attack by throwing its beak at Muneshige’s face.

*“to use food as weapon, how stingy Ginchiyo-dono! Please stop!”*

*“fuwawa! Hyuga’s chicken is delicious! It lay eggs too! Besides, the extremely well-bred Muneshige wouldn’t be able to handle foods roughly! Therefore its impossible to counter-attacked a chicken! More, charge!”*

*“koke~!”*

*“eeh? Muneshige’s young wife Ginchiyo is seriously attacking her husband? Don’t tell me that Gaspard’s brainwashing is dead? is it for inciting discord within Tachibana family?”* Yoshiharu got confused. Muneshige who caught the chicken at one side and holding down Ginchiyo’s tackle at one hand, *“my apologies. Ginchiyo-dono always attacked me whenever she find me”* and floated a wry smile.

No matter how much the litte Ginchiyo seriously attacked, she doesn’t seem to be able to give any damage to Muneshige who is a prodigy of martial arts. For that reason, *“damn you!”* Ginchiyo had her face reddened and didn’t loosen down her attack.

But the problem was.....Tachibana Muneshige who is the very picture of ideal, noble and virtuous human being and also Ginchiyo’s husband, blood rushes up to his head. *“doing this your husband, prostate yourself! This is the only that I will forgive you today!”* he grabbed Ginchiyo’s small body and turn it around.

*“what? Muneshige?”* Yoshiharu called out to him. It doesn’t seems that both Muneshige and Ginchiyo weren’t able to show any beautiful good and beautiful relationship. Even if the person himself is a superman, it seems that there are still some partners that he won’t have patience with. *“do they have compatibility.....”*Yoshiharu closes his eyes.

*“Ginchiyo-dono! I am angry that I am robbed from my family inheritance – Tachibanayama castle for being a stepson from Takahashi family. But this is for the sake of Otomo clan! Be more reasonable! Can’t you serve obediently as my wife?”*

*“no way! Because Muneshige, aren’t you actually a woman? a woman marrying another woman is strange! Why does Ginchiyo need to hand over the family inheritance of Tachibana castle to a woman?! go back to your family Muneshige! Return Tachibanayama castle as well!”*

*“koke~!”*

*“y-y.....you are a GIRL?????!!!!”*

*“TACHIBANA MUNESHIGE IS ACTUALLY A GIIIIIRL?????!!!!”*



*“not only that, Ginchiyo is her young bride???”*

*“is it allowed for a girl to marry another girl????!!!”*

*“”WHY. WHY????””*

Yoshiharu and Yoshihi whose cheeks are twisted looked at each other. They both are lost in words.

*“d-d-d-don’t say it like that Ginchiyo-dono! Certainly its unfortunate that I am a girl, despite that I am just barely manly enough to act as a husband, I’m sorry!”*

*“alright, I forgive you~!”*

*“I will grow up to an ideal husband for Ginchiyo-dono someday!”*

*“how much training would it take to make a girl be an ideal husband?! I mean, how are you going to make Ginchiyo conceive children?”*

*“its possible! Although right now I am still too immature as a man, it would be possible somehow if I use guts and fighting spirits! Recently, I have been reading the principle of married couples in Tales of Genji at every night! Someday, I will definitely make Ginchiyo-dono conceive children for sure! I will show you!”*

Tachibana Muneshige is a boy (or a girl?) who is one of the best in kyushu for being a prodigy and accomplished in both literal and martial arts.

He has been trained in severe, life threatening and yet secular training for both literal and martial arts. He is a super noble child who is raised in a completely pure environment.

And yet, he still doesn’t know the method of making children during marriages.

*“can you do it?! Everytime I meet you, your stupid boobs are keep growing! Its useless even if hiding it behind the armor! Is that a sarcasm for flat-chested Ginchiyo?! Is that a sarcasm?! Then eat this!!!”*

*“hurt, hurt, it hurt! Recently, my chest is hurting! Please stop hurting my chest Ginchiyo-dono! If keep doing that, I will throw you far away to the sky of at Mushiga with all of my strength!”*

*“Ginchiyo know it-tsu! You keep doing “training for chest problem” so that you can finally become a man~! You changed your name to Muneshige since your boobs keep growing-tsu! Return to your original name before you were adopted!”*

*“certainly I want to be a man, but I don’t want to throw away my chest which I have received from my parents! Therefore, at the very least my chest is the only part that seems to a girl. That’s why I changed my name to “Muneshige”*

*“nyandatto? You still have lingering feeling about the boobs? This, immature person!”*

Muneshige who seems to have exceed her limit of patience, throw Ginchiyo away in a large swing. *“aree. I will remember this”* Ginchiyo disappear unto the night sky while shouting out a curse.

*“what, Muneshige?! You throw away Ginchiyo like a fireworks display?!”*

*“its alright Yoshiharu-dono. It’s a shame but the discord between me and Ginchiyo-dono is because of our forced marriage. When we meet each other it would develop into a duel....you might not think so but she is a full-fledged princess general who was raised in severe training by Gifu-jo and soon she will come back”*

Muneshige sighed *“haa”* and gently patted the chicken who is being violent and kindly let it run to pursue its owner.

*“Muneshige. If this bloodthirsty marital relationship keep continuing then it would develop into exchanging one own life soon. Right now Ginchiyo’s body is small but soon when her body grow, her strength will also improves. Furthermore, since this is Hyuga, she is only finished with handling a chicken if it in Higo she will start controlling a bear”*

*“there is no problem since my mind is always ready for combat! This is also training! Why must I a woman need to be Ginchiyo-dono’s husband? Even now I still cannot*

*understand Gifu-jo's absurdity.....haa.....when I think that the two of us will be in discord for a lifetime, it feels depressing, right? Afterall Ginchiyo-dono aren't tolerant about this things....."*

*"certainly. This is too unreasonable. It would be a discord"* Yoshiharu sympathizes with those two people.

*"just what the heck is it.....Yoshiharu didn't awaken any preference towards a children, it's a relief that the perception of his fondness with woman has been strangely supported with Muneshige, but.....wait a second. Now that we found out that she is a charming and beautiful princess general that disguises herself as a man, I can't feel relieved at all. Hey Yoshiharu! Let alone Iehisa and Yoshihiro, you aren't supposed to increase your local wife even more! When I take my eyes from you for a while, you keep grasping a maiden's hearts one after another like Genji. I am worried"*

*"please stop being jealous for an unseen future on your own, Yoshihi-Neesan! To begin with, there is no such thing as local wives!"*

In Tachibana clan, Ginchiyo is the biological child who is being trained as a princess general to succeed the clan at first. Later on, the girl Muneshige was taken from Takahashi clan to become a boy and later stepson to succeed their family inheritance. Perhaps, it's the rule of Tachibana clan that a boy must be the one who succeed the family inheritance. At Sengoku era where a princess generals is a common things, this could be said as uncommon case. The fact that even Yoshihi is surprised mean that's a strange case that are uncommon in Kyushu. And then, this Tachibana clan strict law is the reason which create a distortion where a girl would marry another little girl as married couple. When one think about it, the flags of lily cross that were hung alongside Mushiga's roadways seem to have deeper meaning to Yoshiharu's eyes now.

*"aah? That's right, since I was attacked by Ginchiyo-dono, I forgot about it.....my mission is the defense of Mushiga. You two are arrested and will be taken to the strategist –Kuroda Kanbei-dono!"*

*“just how many restriction is there for a diplomatic messenger? Just how outrageous Kyushu can be? Can’t you let us meet Sorin?!”*

*“m-my apologies! In case that Sagara Yoshiharu arrived at Mushige, at that time he must be arrested. That is the order from the strategist! B-because you two are “Sagara Yoshiharu”, you two are recognized as the target for arrest”*

*“eii. I change my name to Yoshihi. This crossdressing girl doesn’t have any flexibility”*

*“I’m sorry! Because strategist-dono stated that its simple for someone to impersonate a general by using their name but be especially careful with a suspicious princess general that excel in strategy. That’s the command!”*

*“huuh! What’s that about.....how unexpectedly convincing!”*

...

...

...

After being his arm bounded together with Yoshihi, Yoshiharu who was taken out to the cathedral *“that reminds me, what happened to Konoe-ossan?”* asked it out. The thoughtless Konoe Sakihisa *“Maro will persuade them de-ojaru!”* charge ahead as a messenger for peace under Otomo Sorin without permission. he is missing ever since then.

*“K-kampaku-sama has been detained by strategist-dono. T-that person was, doing Yobai to lord Sorin. Because he was planning to use romantic love advocate a renunciation of war, it was inevitable that this Muneshige was present. Since Kampaku-sama weren’t carrying any killing intent, he was full of opening and I beat him half to death...master who was nearly persuaded by Kampaku-sama “this Kampaku-san underestimates Sorin. Though my mind is similar like tofu, e-even so, it’s a big mistake if you thought that I will fall in love with anyone. Punish him” so I was ordered to repel him.....to be so ambition over doing a task faithfully.....I, I am still immature”*

*"it wasn't necessary to beat him half to dead. You capture me and Yoshiharu because we share the same name. don't you think that you took orders too seriously?"*

*"but that was a big failure back at Shimazu clan, don't tell me he is using the same method again? There is no helping it, that maro"*

*"fufufu. Nice to meet you people of Sagara clan. I have been waiting for you. the time has come to prove that Kurokan Ichiryuu. Please don't be a nuisance peoples. It would be a problem if you peoples loitering around the camp. You are going to accompanies the forces attacking Taka castle as hostages"*

Kuroda Kanbei is Number One

The cathedral's gate opened and a lively girl with familiar voice barge in.....

*"Kanbei!"* Yoshiharu shouted while having his arms restrained.

However, Kanbei who should've make a reunion after a long time, has a word "Evil Kanbei Akukan" literally painted in black ink under the forehead and eyes. Her eyes also aren't adjusted to Yoshiharu. *"hmph. So you are alive huh? Sagara Yoshiharu. Even if you have arrived at Mushiga, its too late now"* she was twisting her mouth and smile wickedly.

That Kanbei was dragging around a chain which were extended from the neck of a prisoner with an iron mask on his face while groaning *"fogu fogu"*. *"don't tell me, is that Konoe Sakihisa? Apparently Konoe's absolute weapon against girls "the ultimate beautiful man's face" has been sealed. To treat Konoe-ossan who is the Kampaku like this even for an instant, just how much did you not consider the consequences? Truly Akukan"* Yoshiharu was at his wits end.

*"Kanbei! You seem to have rejected the dark future that Gaspard told you but listen to me! You are being manipulated by Gaspard! Didn't I say it before at Harima? The future is never truly fixed!"*

*"hmph. Sagara Yoshiharu. You know about Simon's future as a second rate yet you are being silent about it"*

*"it was my fault that I was being silent. But I never realized that you would actually become a second rate in the future! even though you have a habit of behaving recklessly, you always give me advice beforehand.....like that time when I charging into Ukita Naoie"*

*"hmph" Kanbei snorted.*

*"even if you are talking about that old story and try to appeal to Simon's feeling, its useless"*

*"I don't have that intention, Kanbei. If you have some kind of plan, please consult with me"*

*"fufu. Don't worry. As for the plan that I prepared for this battle is three plans that is the good, medium and bad plan. Any of those will certainly succeed. Don't disturb it. Don't interfere in it. Now that Oda and Mori are fighting at Honshu, this is the last and first chance of my life that Simon got. if you do even a slightly useless struggling, Simon's grand strategy will be bounced back and back and collapse"*

*"Kanbei! At the very least, removes my and Yoshihi-Neesan's handcuff! Let us meet Sorin!"*

*"shut up. Stop it. Don't make complain like a red-nosed lord! What's with Yoshihi-Neesan?! At the time you brought a local wife to Mushiga, you credibility has gone downfall! I stop serving as your strategist anymore, now I am spreading the name of Kurokan Ichiryuu as the strategist of Otomo clan"*

*"Yoshihi is not a local wife but my sister. Its Sagara corps long awaited vice general! It would be a problem if the strategist and vice general doesn't get along"*

*"mufu. I will praise your crafty strategy that excel in increasing the number of local wives one after another as well as Ane and Imoutos. Rather to say it for Otomo clan, its outrageous to flirt with Shimazu 4 sisters who is the enemy of Oda clan! Its detestable but all of Shimazu 4 sisters must be buried at the battlefield of Taka castle"*

*“Shimazu and Oda aren’t in hostile relationship. If Gaspard urged Sorin to build a kingdom of god then its not necessary that both Shimazu and Otomo clan to bet their fate on a decisive battle at Hyuga. Remember that our mission wasn’t to make both sides to fight each other but to make peace between the two clans!”*

*“this is the country of Shura – Kyushu, Sagara Yoshiharu. There is no way for the two clans to understand each other except through fist to fist. Of course if both side were to clash against each other with full power, either side would certainly collapse but its Shimazu clan that would fall. This Simon shall change her life as a second rate from now on. I thank Gaspard who told Simon’s future. fufufu”*

*“what are we going to do with Nobuna who fall at predicament at Honshu?”*

*“to make Simon’s flag of Kurokan Ichiryuu flutters in the world, they have to hold out a bit more. While Oda army are fighting against Kanto faction and Mori clan, Simon will suppress Kyushu by using the power from Otomo army. then I will take Mori’s Chugoku region while they are away. 1 month is enough. The western countries will belong to Simon! At the time that Mori’s territories got taken, Oda, Takeda and Uesugi will be exhausted. Well, Oda clan may perish...but anyway, Simon will take 1/3 part of the world. Indeed, this Simon will accomplished Tenka Fubu”*

*“oii Kanbei?! You, actually...saying that? Are you seriously saying that?”*

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. You should’ve known. Simon’s ambition is only one. Its to show my tactical genius to the world. This is first and last chance to achieve that ambition”*

*“its not like that. Didn’t you want to go the world beyond the sea Kanbei?”*

*“shut up! The hell with crossing over the sea, if I got a second rate life where my talent will be wasted until the end! Simon realized that it’s the best shortcut if Simon take the world herself!”*

*“you are being manipulated by Gaspard. If you can’t let us meet Sorin then at least let us meet Gaspard!” Yoshiharu approach Kanbei but she shook her head in disapproval.*

*“Gaspard has already led a detached force and are on his way to Taka castle through mountains from Takachiho. He is not in Mushiga. Frois are going together with Gaspard on behalf of restraining his actions”*

*“a detached force?!”*

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. Everyone think that Otomo’s detached force that choose a severe path of crossing the mountain will not be in time for the battle. But Simon got a plan. Fufufu. Kurokan Ichiryuu!”*

*The whole army will leave Mushiga tomorrow. It will march towards Mimigawa after crossing Hyuga highway at full speed and surround Shimazu Iehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle!*

*The most important place at Taka castle is Neshirosaka which is located on top of a hill where one could view the whole battlefield. The side that obtained Neshirosaka first would obtain overwhelming advantage! There is no time to waste. Quickly march! The provisions are enough for 3 days! There is no need to be worried about the food!*

*If Taka castle falls, we will survive. If it doesn’t fall, there will only be destruction for Otomo clan! The biggest weakness of Otomo army is that it wasn’t possible to control the big army since the current head of the clan – Otomo Sorin herself didn’t come out in the frontline! That was the reason why Otomo Sorin’s Otouto who is the head of Ouchi clan were helplessly destroyed by Mori clan. Its also the reason why they lost at battle of Imayama where they weren’t able to destroy Ryuzoji clan who shut themselves at Saga castle despite the former has overwhelming advantage. And finally it’s the reason of defeat for the battle of Mimigawa that would start now. but this time, Sorin herself personally led 20000 soldiers to the front. This Simon takes over the whole army. any person who defied Simon’s order will be judged under the military law without mercy! Even if that person is Kampaku!*

Kanbei was being gleeful to Muneshige and notified the pumpkin soldier girl.



For the soldier girl who worship Sorin, she has been fascinated by the Kanbei's flowing speech and she was charmed by the sparkling genius strategist. Even Muneshige *"this person is born as a strategist. There is no stopping her now..."* has her face flushed and blushed.

*".....Yoshiharu. Is this alright?"*

Yoshihi who had her arms in handcuff frowned but for Yoshiharu, his intention to stop Kanbei has disappeared.

*".....I guess so.....Kanbei and I got along with each other until recently. Ever since the battle at Harima, we have been pass through the verge of death many time together. We are lifelong friends. Kanbei's sorrow and shock after being informed about her future, I understand it completely. Even though she is a genius, its precisely that she is a genius that in her life, she were feared by powerful men and were avoided by central political power. its impossible for Kanbei to contently accept her future where she will be buried in the corner of Kyushu without being able to demonstrate her ability"*

*"hmp, it useless for you to say that you understand it in order to raise my sympathy, Sagara Yoshiharu"* Kanbei laughed.

*".....for a lifetime, this Simon wasn't able to demonstrate her resourcefulness as a strategist. For a lifetime, this talent is being neglected by men of power. My ambition was in doubt. I was destined to die at Nakatsu without being able to use my talent to the fullest. Even after taking advantage from a big battle at Honshu in order to do a last decisive match at Kyushu, it was laughably ended in vain.....what the hell with Josui! Simon aren't a hermit like Takenaka Hanbei! But! That miserable future will not come anymore! Since Simon has knew her future, I will change everything! The biggest tragedy for those who live as a strategist is to be defeated in a fight of resourcefulness rather than battles. It is to die without being able to demonstrate their tactical talent! Simon will give every ability as a strategist for this battle that weren't originally given to her! Even if I die in battle, there will be no regrets!"*

*“As Takenaka Hanbei has overcome her fate, Simon will overcome her own fate as well...!”. Kanbei were talking joyfully while pulling the chain linked to Konoe’s neck who were shouting “this, this impertinent fellow! That, to treat this Maro so roughly like Sagara Yoshiharu, I will get my revenge even if you won the war de-ojaru! Removes this iron mask de-ojaru!”.*

At this time, one of the soldier girls who wildly respect Sorin forgot something after being excited by Kanbei’s speech. *“Strategist-sama, under Sorim-sama order, the prisoner - Sagara Yoshiharu’s neck will be beheaded at this place!”*

*“Sorin-sama will offer it to namban’s god – Deus-sama whom she worship!”*

*“I think so. Although it’s a little cruel, but a sacrifice is necessary for the holy war!”*

The soldiers girls who were covered in pumpkin headgear approached Yoshiharu who were handcuffed. Muneshige and Yoshihi *“that’s no good!”*, *“they are in state of religious euphoria, this is bad!”* they are trying to hold back the girls but their number are too many. Yoshiharu is encircled and confronted by spears at all sides while struggling to avoid it.

*“quit it. The prisoner is an important trump card suitable for bargaining with Shimazu clan. You must not kill him. Any person who harmed Sagara Yoshiharu and Sagara Yoshihi will be executed without mercy”*

Kanbei restrained the girls. But her expression remained that of a cold strategist.

*“send those two to jail. Otomo Sorin may unreasonably want to talk with those two. As for Sorin, there is one princess general...never let Sagara Yoshihi free. I will order Tachibana Muneshige tomorrow morning to bring those two to Taka castle”*

After Kanbei left the room, Yoshihi is worried about Yoshiharu’s body.

*“Yoshiharu. Weren’t you going to discuss things directly with Kuroda Kanbei somehow? Its impossible to approach her for questioning! With this, it means we just nonchalantly came to Mushiga and become easy prisoners. In the first place, are you two really a friend to each other?”*

*“at-at the very least, she recognized our value as hostage. Its unlikely that me and Yoshihi-Neesan were to be killed suddenly.....”*

*“conversely, once we deemed useless, we will be disposed!”*

*“how could it be, Kanbei?! No that’s not it. Gaspard should’ve only just brainwashed her or something, originally she wasn’t such Akukan! But no, in the history, Kanbei use the chance to steal Kyushu during the confusion of the battle of Sekigahara.....but, that happened in the world where Kanbei didn’t meet me! Since Hanbei is alive, Kanbei couldn’t do such betrayal”*

*“she were saying there is local wives here and then. Could it be that she were disgusted by you who keep snatching princess general’s maiden love at Kyushu even though Oda Nobuna is in dilemma?*

*“that’s why I told you it’s a misunderstanding! Kanbei, please return, listen to what I am saying!”*

*“i-its alright. I will guarantee the safety of you two”* Muneshige said some comforting words to Yoshiharu, while all troops are preparing for departure.

Suddenly, a namban girls band lined up in the cathedral and begun to perform some lively namban music performance.

*“something like a “wedding march” or like TokyoOOOOLand Parade...”* Yoshiharu thought so. The queen of Bungo appeared while being surrounded by music and riding a beast imported from namban – the elephant.

*“at last, because Simon has leave the room, I was able to meet Sagara Yoshiharu-kun. I was being noisy about meeting you, right? I am Otomo Sorin. Its been while right? Sagara Yoshihi. As for Sagara Yoshiharu-kun, how do you do?...this helmet which look like a pointy hat is a custom made item for Sorin. As Frois say, Christianity has become popular in Sorin’s Mushiga, but its slightly different from orthodox catholic. If Vatican would judge it, Sorin would be deemed as heretic...I would be called a witch. If its japan then it should be demoness right? Against Oda Nobuna who is nicknamed “Dairokuten Maou”, Sorin would called herself as “Namban Witch”*

Otomo Sorin who appeared at the cathedral in Mushiga has an appearance completely like a magical girl. The lightweight helmet has a golden leaf shaped thin layer that were strangely pointed out. It had bizarre length just like the tower of this cathedral. It just like a witch's cone shaped hat.

But she didn't wear armor since her body is weak. She is wearing a black namban mantle. She is holding a thin cane in her hands instead of a Japanese sword.

Of course, it goes without saying that Sorin's pumpkin that were flashed out as human faced pumpkin decorate her gorgeous mantle and her headgear along with her various elaborate props.

Although she is a bit older than Nobuna, she attended a Halloween party *"trick or treat!"*. Despite being the supreme commander for a decisive battle against Shimazu army tomorrow morning, she makes a noise and expression like an innocent child. There is no resolution of a queen of country of Shura who is ready to contend for a battle could be felt within Sorin.

She may actually lose sight of the difference between dream and reality.

*"I borrow the sacred tree of Usa-Hachiman shrine and had finished shaping it as a cane for talisman. Because I dismantled many shrine and temples and use it to build Mushiga town, I have incurred many people's grudge. However, when priest and monks are attacking Sorin, I can disperse them by brandishing this cane"*

*"as expected, Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono fainted when they find out that the sacred tree was cut down to be made as a pagan magic wand"* Muneshige whispered softly to Yoshiharu.

*"Usa-Hachiman shrine is.....is it the head temple of all Hachiman shrine at japan?"*

*"yes. Aside from the princess generals who were still young, all of the old retainers are in uproar"*

With this, its impossible for Otomo clan to be harmonious.

*"Sorin-sama is wonderful", " she is not scared with divine punishment", "Sorin-sama's witch appearance is cute"* But, soldiers girl who were assigned to protect

Sorin and wearing pumpkin headgear, are being excited when seeing Sorin brandished her cane ecstatically. For the princess generals and soldier girls who just met their puberty, Sorin who introduced Christianity and western culture to Bungo and continuing dressing like a Kabuki despite the protest from old retainers, Sorin is viewed as an existence like an idol.

There is also a charismatic like aspect of Kabuki's girl found in Nobuna. But Nobuna's Kabuki appearance is the result of pursuing functionality for battle. In a manner of speaking, its combining practicality. But, as for Sorin who is not interested in actual battle at all, it was clear that she want to become a witch for the sake of being submerged in the world of dream. Making a cane out of the sacred tree of Usa-Hachiman shrine is completely over the top.

*"its proved in the historical battle of Mimigawa where they got completely defeated. On the other hand, Shimazu army is a pure battle group that completely devote themselves in pragmatism. Their sense of battle is too different..."* Yoshiharu thought so.

Rather, it makes one wonder that Sorin was once a wise ruler who repel Mori Motonari's invasion of Kyushu. If Sorin ever get serious, she would possessed an intellect that are on equal term even with Mori Motonari. However, right now Sorin is exhausted from successive battle in the country of Shura and she hoped to shut herself in the country of dream – Mushiga.

The eyes of Sorin seemed to be wandering in a dream. When she opened her eyes, she didn't see the real world at all.

Tomorrow morning, Otomo army would depart to the frontline from Mushiga towards Taka castle.

Is it possible to dissuade the outbreak of war tonight?

*"I am the official messenger from the Oda clan, Sagara Yoshiharu. As for Yoshihi, since she once was allied to Sorin, I will skip the introduction. Right now the Sagara clan are the subordinates to Shimazu clan after the family inheritance is being succeeded by Yoshihi's Imouto Tokuchiyo. Tokuchiyo protect the Hitoyoshi castle*

*and didn't participate in battle of Taka castle. As such, Yoshihi should be regarded as a messenger for peace from Shimazu clan"*

*"kyaa. Its Sagara Yoshiharu-kun who opened the Amano-Iwato! The real thing is much cooler than the shadow that rose in the sky!"*

*"c-cool?! Y-You mean me?"*

*Those words, isn't it the first time I ever hear that on my life? did she possess a peculiar aesthetic sense? Because she is a girl who like to mass produced human faced pumpkin, could it be slightly different?*

*(what the heck happened?) Yoshiharu is confused and Sorin pressed further.*

*"Sorin has decided from the beginning that you are the only one who can be my lover! If I live through the path of faith that Gaspard-sama show me, then I will remain a virgin maiden. But its hard to abandon the path love right? But, its no good if the partner is the Maro of Yamato Gosho, right? Because Sorin like every new things, old fashioned gentlemen are useless! Because I'm scared of men of bloody Shuras of Kyushu, its also useless! There is only you who came from the future! but certainly, since you were stolen first by Oda Nobuna in Honshu, I was half-giving up. Yet, you came all the way to Mushiga to meet Sorin. This certainly an encounter of destiny, isn't it?"*

*"Eh? Eh? Eh?"*

*"really, what the heck is happened? I haven't set up any flag at all! This is my first time meeting with Sorin" Yoshiharu cannot understand the reason.*

*"you came here to become Sorin's lover, right? Welcome!!!"*

The elephant cries "paoo". All of the namban girl band started to play a wedding march in high volume.

In the hands of pumpkin soldier girls, "we passionately welcome you, Sagara Yoshiharu-kun" and "Oh, the love of my soul!" there are incomprehensible flags stretched behind Sorin.

*“tonight, it will be a bridal night for the two of us, Yoshiharu-kun! I’m looking forward to it. To steal the lover of the ruler of world, there is a burning sense of immorality. Haaa! Your handcuff aren’t being removed. Restrained person are cute, right? Fufu, fufufufufu!”*

*“eh eh eh eh?! No, th-that’s wrong! I came here to negotiate for a cease fire! Why are you making Nobuna as your sworn enemy?! Yoshihi-Neesan too! Please don’t glare at Sorin with squinted eye! Please say something!”*

*“hmpf. Is that so...you had a favorable opportunity to steadily use the Crusade to build a kingdom of pumpkin, Sorin. But.....if you want to associate yourself with my Yoshiharu then you need to obtain my permission as his Ane!”*

*“I told you, that’s not what are we talking about! Its the negotiation! Negotiation!”*

*“negotiation? Aah, that’s right huh, Yoshiharu. Listen Sorin! The 4 sisters of Shimazu clan likes Yoshiharu. It come to such extent that they welcome him to become the son-in-law for Shimazu clan. You can say that both Iehisa and Yoshihiro are scrambling to get rid each other for my Yoshiharu. Therefore, the 4 sisters thinking about making temporary peace with you in order to rescue Oda Nobuna who has fall into difficult situation. Even if a permanent peace is impossible, when the Otomo army send their soldiers to Chugoku region to prevent Mori’s advancement to the capital, then Shimazu clan would stop their advance to the north. Also, remove mine and my Otouto’s handcuff immediately!”*

*“uwaa. What the heck? Scrambling for Sagara Yoshiharu? Shimazu 4 sisters is the worst! They should be killed!”*

*“listen to me! Right now, Oda Nobuna is being surrounded from 3 sides by Mori army, Uesugi Kenshin and Takeda Shingen. If we spend time leisurely at Taka castle, Oda clan will perish. Kanbei seriously has self-confidence that she can defeat Shimazu clan but Shimazu army aren’t weak! Its necessary to avoid this war to save Oda Nobuna. Most of all, stop troubling my Otouto!”*

*“what should I do? Things will not end well if Sorin trust those alluring words and got stabbed in the back. If there is at least one hostage from Shimazu 4 sisters, its*

*possible to trust them. After all, Iehisa stayed at Taka castle and didn't come over here to Mushiga. As expected, Shimazu clan want to make war with Sorin. As for Yoshihi, I like her when she was having a discord with her Imouto. Now I hate it!" Sorin puffed her cheeks.*

*"wh-wha-what are you saying?!"*

*"after all Yoshihi, aren't you having a discord with Tokuchiyo? To hand over the family inheritance to your Imouto whom you had treated so cruelly until now, its impossible!"*

*"...guh...that was...there was a lot of circumstances in the first place. Why do I must get scolded even though I have reconciled with my Imouto. Usually its should be the reverse"*

*"I also hate Yoshihi's Oji-sama. I certainly thought that Tokuchiyo is being bullied, but he put her in Yatsushiro to protect Tokuchiyo from problems about family inheritance. Sorin thinks that Sagara clan is unbelievable. Things like Yoshihi letting Kai Soun to cut her neck in order to protect Tokuchiyo is out of question"*

*"you. why do you come into that kind of conclusion?"*

*"Shimazu 4 sister as well, I hate them from the beginning since they were so intimate to each other. The 4 sisters should've scrambled to kill each other for the family inheritance and Sagara Yoshiharu right? Why does Yoshihiro who is so strong and loved by the retainers and men pointlessly serve the block-headed Yoshihisa who can't decide on anything without using fortune slips?"*

*"she really hate families that has good relationship with each other" Yoshiharu sighed.*

*"Sorin and I were supposed to be a good friend but now Sorin is looking at me with cold eyes. It seems that the reason is because I have reconciled with Tokuchiyo. This is bad" the usually calm Yoshihi begun to become a bit impatient.*

*"nee, Muneshige. I expect success from you in this Crusade. You are the Ultimate Weapon of Otomo clan that has been raised personally by Dosetsu and Shoun. With*



*the latest weapon from namban given by Gaspard-sama – The Kunikuzushi – Simon’s resourcefulness and lastly Muneshige bravery, isn’t it possible to oppose the powerful and unparalleled Shimazu army? the mistakes from the battle of Imayama will not be repeated right?”*

Making One’s Best Efforts

*“yes! I’m thankful for your words. This Muneshige will work by Funkotsusaishin so that I would be accepted as lord’s Otouto!”*

Muneshige was brought and trained with the purpose of supporting the Otomo clan. She moved in tears in deep emotion as she were given such expectation from her master. If its Sorin’s order, Muneshige would even commit seppuku at this place.

But, Sorin frowned when she hear the word “Otouto” from Muneshige.

*“.....its not Otouto! After all, Muneshige is a girl right? How long are you going to keep crossdressing as a boy? Even after having Ginchiyo as you bride, why are you so fixated on being a male warrior?”*

*“th-that’s, I also don’t understand that. This is something that Gifu-jo deeply thought about”*

*“I don’t understand it. Things like a samurai clan must be succeeded by a man is too old fashioned, right? Its not how its done nowadays. Mou, that’s already a 300 years old way thinking!”*

*“...as for becoming a married couple with a girl, I also doesn’t understand it. But this is Gifu-jo’s strong demand...its unavoidable. I am still immature since I cannot love Ginchiyo as a wife and instead acted upon Ginchiyo severely”*

*“since Ginchiyo is unbearably cute, isn’t it normal to flirt out? Not being possible to fall in love with gentlemen, that’s a poor thing, right? But Gaspard-sama also forbid Sorin to fall in love. Even though I am already in marriageable age, how difficult”*

*“...falling in love with a g-gentleman is...for me, that’s an irrelevant story...”*

The shaking Muneshige glanced at Yoshiharu and immediately averted her eyes since she was embarrassed.

*"Muneshige doesn't live in worries and hesitation. I envy you. there is no such thing as "myself" in you"*

*"yes! Both Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono has taught me to carried out my loyalty by fighting and die for my lord. Certainly, its true that I have never hesitate for even once"*

*".....hmph. I never hold any problem about that absurd way of training. Muneshige is a splendid retainer but she isn't suitable for Sorin's Otouto, right? There is resemblance to Sorin at all"*

*"...i-is that so? This Muneshige will do anything in order to get to know about the lord's heart. What should I do?"*

*"I don't know. Have ever thought of it yourself? At least, Sorin doesn't have preferences of marrying a girl"*

Muneshige sorrowfully lowered her eyebrows "uuh". Even if Muneshige are evaluated as a general. She doesn't seem to be accepted as a candidate for an Otouto by Sorin. Yoshiharu felt sorry for Muneshige. However, Tachibana clan's intention to make a girl to become an Otouto for Sorin is certainly a mystery. If they wanted to make Muneshige as a family for Sorin for the sake of helping Sorin then wouldn't it be alright to make her an Imouto instead? If the flawless Muneshige who has three combination of loyalty, peerless might and virtue are received as a step-sister, then Sorin would be pleased with that.....

*"Sagara Yoshiharu. You will be guided to Sorin's bedroom. Tonight in Mushiga, there is no Gaspard-sama who is strict about a Christians queen shouldn't be concerned with a man. for Sorin, there is no two opportunities to be able to spend night the heroic man from the future who opened Amano-Iwato. Now that I personally go to the battlefield as a general, I would die if I got defeated by Shimazu clan, right? Because the path of retreat, Mimigawa has risen due to heavy rain, I would die by drowning when I retreat at Mimigawa"*

*"you want to spend all night together? With me?"*

*"uhun. I mean, aren't the two of us already lovers?"*

*"no, I don't remember of having such kind of relationship"*

*"Yoshiharu. Be careful. The Sorin right now is somehow different from the past Sorin who has overflowing clear intelligence. She was originally a delicate princess general. She seems to be exhausted by continuous battles that would never stop and has her heart broken. She is literally a witch. Being alone with her is dangerous"*  
Yoshihi who is worried about Yoshiharu's body whispered to him while being paled.  
*"I know Yoshihi-Neesan. But there is no other way to prevent the war anymore. I will lose the opportunity to persuade Sorin if I don't go to her bedroom tonight"*  
Yoshiharu shook his head.

*"Yoshiharu? Only to this woman that you don't have any conviction to understand all about the truth? Don't tell me, you aren't suggesting to accept Sorin's demand of making you her lovers?"*

*"its not like that Yoshihi-Neesan. But, if Sorin needs me, then I want to see how much can I do about it. I am, as I would say it.....have always respected the princess generals of Sengoku era"*

*"you are still being too generous. Just remember how much severe the world of Kyushu is!"*

*"aah. Sorin hate a figure of Ane and Otouto flirting together! Since I have a headache, couldn't you guys stop it? Hey Muneshige. Guide Yoshihi to the jail! Let her spend the night there!"*

*"hey, Tachibana Muneshige! Let me go! I refuse to stay at a separate room from my Otouto! Now that Sorin and Yoshiharu will spend a night together, its no joke! Its too dangerous!"*

*"b-but. The lord's order is absolute. My apology!"*

After Yoshihi dragged by Muneshige.

*“now then, Sagara Yoshiharu. You will be taken to my bedroom where Sorin had never specially invite anyone in. can you change Sorin’s fate?”*

Her expression and voices are different from the earlier Sorin that acted like a clown.

*“.....at any rate, it wouldn’t be able to be changed”*

It is not an eyes of a girl who fall in love with Yoshiharu.

*“oh, yes! Please don’t disappoint Sorin. If you become a monkey while we are on our way to the room and attacked me, I will be disappointed and so I won’t remove the handcuff yet”*

It was frozen.

Its different from Kobayakawa-san who lost her beloved Oni-san in the past or Uesugi Kenshin who is tired of solitude of living as the incarnation of Bishamonten.....the thing that covered Sorin’s eyes is deep and bottomless. It was a pitch-black darkness. Until now, Yoshiharu has never seen a girl whose heart are damaged and suffered.

*“Otomo Sorin wished that I will grant her love that she always imagined but not only that she wanted to tell me something that she doesn’t want to convey to other person”* Yoshiharu thought. Would it be the missionary Gaspard who has the power to predict the future or would it be the man from the future Sagara Yoshiharu who came to this world and opened the Amano-Iwato? After Xavier’s death, is there any other person who can support her breaking heart? Even Sorin aren’t sure about it herself. Therefore, on the night before the decisive battles, it needs to be ascertain as soon as possible. Otomo Sorin who keep act like a clown, decorating the town of Mushiga with pumpkin herself and making a magic wand, her heart is the most dangerous area....Yoshiharu try to break into it.

*“if you make Sorin disappointed, then there is no need to keep dreaming about the path of romantic love. Sorin would choose the path of belief that Gaspard-sama showed me without reserve”*

*“if Goemon is at this place right now,..... “that’s why, it just like what I’ve said de-gozaru. Sagara-shi has only one heart and body. Trying to know all the truth, that’s impossible Sagara-shi de-gozaru” she might bit her tongue while scolding me” Yoshiharu thought.*

*“I don’t know if I can meet with your expectation. But, you as the queen of the six countries of Kyushu is a princess general who survives through Kyushu of Sengoku era, I cannot afford to make you disappointed”*

*“before dawn comes, Sorin would hate it. Certainly, such woman is hard to associate with. So give up, things about Sorin, the witch who kill her Otouto.....even if it just once, she is a terrible Ane who never fight to protect her Otouto. For you who has a close relationship with Yoshihi, I am the worst woman”*

*“.....rumors about peoples are always exaggerated. Please let me hear the truth. Why are you being called as Otouto Killer”*

For a moment, Sorin’s eyes that look like it was praying to god, looked at Yoshiharu in just an instant.

...

...

...

## **Chapter 3 - The Prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin**

Sorin’s mansion is built deep hidden inside Mushiga and designed in circular shape. It’s completely done in namban style, reflecting Sorin’s preference.

Sorin removed Yoshiharu’s handcuff. She removes it and the two sat by side on top of the namban bed.

In Otomo Sorin's bed, there is a human faced pumpkin lantern with a cross.....several boys portraits were displayed and it seem that it has been drawn by namban painters.

*"they are Sorin's Otouto. The youngest one – Shioichimaru was killed during "Nikaikuzurenohen". This child is a dim-witted but cheerful boy, he inherited the Ouchi clan and was defeated by Mori Motonari and commit seppuku. His name is Shiootomaru. That cheerful boy over there is Otomo Chikasada whose real name is Hachiro. Hachiro wasn't Sorin's true Otouto but a nephew who is related by blood.*

*All of the children of Otomo clan main family are given the name "Shio"<sup>Salt</sup>. Because Hachiro aren't a child from the main branch, he doesn't have "Shio" added to his name. but.....the head of Hachiro who has defeated by Ryuzoji Takanobu at the battle of Imayama, were pickled in salt inside a bucket and sent to Sorin.....if Hachiro weren't adopted as Sorin's Otouto, his head wouldn't be salted"*

*"every night, Sorin hold a funeral for her Otoutos who were killed during this chaotic times in this secret room" Yoshiharu understand.*

*"everyone, died before even reaching 20 years old. Sorin become the queen of Bungo and was destined to become the queen of six countries of Kyushu. But as the price, I lost my Otoutos. I let my Otoutos die without help. As long as I live, I can't save my Otoutos....."Otouto-Goroshi no Ane". Such is Sorin's fate"*

*".....fate?"*

*"Sorin received a prophecy from the messenger of Usa Hachiman-jin when I was young. From that day, although Sorin feared the future that would surely come days by days, I had to be alive. The prophecy came true one after another. To overcome this fear, I devote myself in searching enlightenment in Buddhism, but it was useless. Xavier-sama who brought the story of salvation from the namban leaves the Bungo and die as it is. The one who will save Sorin from this fear tied by prophecy of this long, long nightmare, will it be the namban missionary Gaspard-sama who succeeded Xavier-sama dying wish...or will it be Sagara Yoshiharu who came from the future? you are one of the possibility"*

There is no one else except Sorin and Yoshiharu in this bedroom. Sorin who abandon her foolish expression of a clown that she show in front of her retainers were watching the moon while standing at the balcony covered with lily flower.

*"Gaspard-sama preached about the love for mankind and neighborhood to Sorin. Because an attachment to one's family is the root of Sorin's suffering, that attachment must be abandoned. But, I wasn't able to consent about it. Its because I saw the Amano-Iwato. Sagara Yoshiharu. The kiss shared between you and Oda Nobuna when you both were completely encircled by enemies at Tennoji and determined to face death, because when I see that figure.....at that moment, you and Oda Nobuna were certainly saved. Assuming that she would die anyway, Oda Nobuna's soul should've saved. In the same way, Jesus Christ died at the cross but Jesus might be lonely when he was on the cross. But, there is a man for shares the last moment with Oda Nobuna. After all, rather than a love for mankind, Sorin loves romance even more....."*

*"Gaspard-sama wanted to allied with Oda Nobuna and be her close associate, and so Sorin will be saved but to obtain Sagara Yoshiharu, Oda Nobuna would be a hindrance. After all love for mankind and romance can't co-exist. Nothing can be gained unless either of them is discarded" Sorin muttered.*

*"right now, Sorin is Gaspard-sama's puppet. I am moved to build a Christians kingdom at Hyuga and re-organize japan into Christians nation. Sorin doesn't actually believe in god called Deus. But, if I don't devote myself in this dream called "Crusade", Sorin's heart won't last any longer. The power of Usa Hachiman-jin doesn't extend to Hyuga. Sorin would be able to escape the prophecy if I can make a heathen namban country. Sagara Yoshiharu. If you want to prevent the crusade at Taka castle.....then save Sorin from this suffering now. right now"*

*"the ominous prophecy from the messenger of Usa Hachiman-jin. It was the trigger that let Sorin falls into Christianity and namban culture to seek salvation from the namban's pagan god" Yoshiharu understood.*

*"what is your fate? What is the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin?"*

Yoshiharu asked Sorin.

*“that is, a story the none of the retainers can know. If the prophecy leaked and many people shares that prophecy, the fate will be closer to being fulfilled. Because I’m scared for such thing to happen, I conceal it for a long time. There is only few people whom I revealed the content of the prophecy. Except for one person, everyone else has died. Only Gaspard-sama who is still alive. “the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin is fake. Those words are just curse to you. there is a person in Zipang who can foresee the future accurately. That person is me” Gaspard-sama encouraged Sorin denied the truth about the prophecy.....but, you came from the future. another man who can foresee the future has appeared. Its has been acknowledged that Gaspard-sama isn’t the only one who can foresee the future. your appearance making Sorin confused. If you didn’t appeared, Sorin would believe in the Christians story brought by the namban from the bottom of her hearts. But, I would most likely be buried in an eternal dream world where the all of the works are being concluded”*

*“I who came from the future don’t think that salvation would come by closing one’s eyes and keep on dreaming” Yoshiharu thought so.*

And thus.

*“it might be a cruel thing to say, Otomo Sorin. You are not a person who can devote yourself to religion and its doctrine from the bottom of your heart. You are too self-willed and moreover intelligent to abandon yourself. No matter how much you behaves like a religious fanatic, you shares the same root as a human with Nobuna”*

*“.....but, I can’t escape the fear from the prophecy for even one day either! If it was Oda Nobuna, she would burn Usa Hachiman shrine and everything will end! Its impossible for Sorin! Its unpleasant to be confused by the prophecy every day. Even if Usa Hachimangu is burned, its not possible to be free from the prophecy that has stuck into my ear...”*

Sorin looked back at Yoshiharu..... with a gun ready on her flowery hand.

It’s a small gun imported from namban.

Even if Sorin is physically weak, its possible shot another person to dead by using gun.....



*"why didn't you serve under Sorin, why did you serve Oda Nobuna? Why didn't you save any of Sorin's Otouto? Why Oda Nobuna's Otouto was saved...? By saving Oda Nobuna's Otouto, you greatly changed that woman's fate. You changed it, Sagara Yoshiharu. Why didn't you come to Bungo but to Owari instead? Even though Sorin keep praying for help until this much, why didn't you descend here at Takachiho?"*

*"...certainly, the Amano-Iwato that me and Nobuna opened at Tennoji was connected to path to return to the future. but I don't remember why I came to Sengoku era in the first place. The fact that I was summoned in the border of Owari and Mikawa...I don't know whose will it was. Or, it might be completely an accident. At that time, if one single different thing happened, I might serve the Imagawa clan rather than Oda clan. Perhaps, Imagawa Yoshimoto's destined defeat at Okehazama would be changed"*

*"it might be a coincidence? Why? You saved Oda Nobuna from her destiny of killing her Otouto.....you saved her from future of anguish, despair and ruin, didn't you?"*

*"that was, something I decided on my own. By my own free will. Sorin. The human destiny and future aren't completely decided. No matter what kind foundation that a future prediction has.....there are no cases of prophecies that are fulfilled with 100% probability. Not to mention, if I am informed about the fate beforehand, the possibility that I could evade it by my action and choices will rise"*

*"that's right. Catholicism also accepted human's free will too. But the god who absolutely doesn't believe in human's free will seems to be more powerful. Now then, have you decided to save Sorin by your own free will from now on? If you refuse...just like the princess Salome who felled John the Baptist's head...your head will be lined up together with the pumpkin lantern after I shot you to death"*

*"the answer after hearing the prophecy" Yoshiharu nodded.*

*"you really doesn't know? Sagara Yoshiharu. It wasn't told in the future?"*

*"no, it wasn't told"*

*"I see. The partner whom Sorin revealed about the prophecy, would die immediately because the prophecy is cursed...but, there is time to leave a note to Gaspard-sama*

*and talk to Frois. That Frois had a habit of writing down a lot about what she had observed in Japan”*

*“although, I have never met him directly, I am aware of a homonymous missionary Gaspard who appears in Sengoku era in the real history. As for this Gaspard, I think that he is somewhat different. I can’t say it well, but there is an uncomfortable feeling regarding his behavior. Could he be an existence that originally shouldn’t be in this world.....”*

*“even you would said such thing Sagara Yoshiharu? A man who came from the future, what is that mean?”*

The reason why Otomo Sorin doesn’t have calm mental condition was already known. The reason why this town was called Mushiga wasn’t because it’s a town of pumpkin. In the real history, Otomo Sorin partly ignores the fact that he is a Sengoku daimyo when he began building Mushiga. He single mindedly build a dreamlike country called Mushiga and shut himself there. but, the moment he hear that the Otomo army who came to Taka castle has been annihilated by Shimazu army, Sorin run away from the country of dream – Mushiga at full speed. The real Otomo Sorin wasn’t able to leave and personally stand in the frontline in the decisive battle that gambled the fate of Otomo clan. He weren’t able to remain at Mushiga for the sake of defending his faith. That wasn’t because Otomo Sorin is a coward who cannot be a true faithful person by nature but because he has strong self-consciousness.

A person called Otomo Sorin was an intelligent and passionate person. Since she has his feeling and intelligent intensely contradict each other, she always wavered between dream and reality. Since she is frightened because of the prophecy, she cannot completely become a pragmatist who denied any irrational prophecy. On the other hand, she also cannot be a fatalist who say that the future cannot be changed by human’s will.

*“Gaspard-sama said that if I killed you by my own hand, the technique of predicting the future will be nullified. Now I have understand the reason why Gaspard-sama wanted to prevented you Sagara Yoshiharu from coming to Mushiga and led a*

*detached force to Takachiho. Because in this way, Sorin and you were able to meet in a secret place without anyone disturbing the two of us.....how about you? whether its Sorin or Oda Nobuna, which one is your choice? Its because Sorin doesn't want to receive half-happiness from someone. If you choose Oda Nobuna.....Sorin would probably shot you reflectively. However, even if it becomes like that, its only the result of Sorin selfishly throwing a tantrum. There is no malicious intent nor any intent to kill Gaspard-sama for this chance for Sorin and you to be alone just the two of us"*

(I see. So I have fell to Gaspard's trap once again) Yoshiharu noticed and bit his lip.

*"Gaspard-sama is really a smart person. However, he has no heart...one cannot think him as a living person but rather a cold man. if possible Sorin want to choose a lifestyle appropriate as a girl rather than a life of a virgin queen who abandon the live of a human"*

While trembling, Sorin put the muzzle of the gun to Yoshiharu's chest who sat upon a namban chair. With one of her finger from her free hand, she stroke Yoshiharu's cheek quietly.

*"the story that Sorin told until now..... especially about the prophecy.....is useless to reveal it to other people, Sagara Yoshiharu. Not only to Simon but also Sagara Yoshihi"*

*"I understand. I promise"*

*"after you finish hearing it.....then save Sorin.....abandon Oda Nobuna, serve Sorin now, swore that you will become Sorin's lover. Declare that you came from the future to save Sorin. If you don't do that, then"*

*"unfortunately, love is different from faith. A person cannot easily change their religion as they changed their mind, Sorin"*

*"then? If its possible to die without falling down to Sorin for the sake of your love to Oda Nobuna, isn't that a wonderful belief? Despite having opened the Amano-Iwato, despite showing a path of salvation that are more preferable than Christianity to Sorin, I don't permit such excuse now"*

...

...

...

There was a little girl with a clever eyes that stood at the other side of the sea from the beach in the region. She was named Shiohoshimaru.

Shiohoshimaru was the legitimate child of Otomo clan of Bungo that has lasted for 20 generation.

Being introvert by nature, Shiohoshimaru was naturally charmed by arts. She doesn't like fighting for one's own life as samurai that transform into Shuras. Despite this however, she was a princess that will succeed Otomo clan and become the queen of Bungo eventually because she is the legitimate child.

If she becomes the queen of Bungo, it would be necessary to spend every day devoting herself to battles and plots at Kyushu of Shura. Shiohoshimaru weren't delightful with that kind of rule.

However, some things happened...

The real mother who loved Shiohoshimaru died of illness. A <sup>Stepmother</sup> Gibu marry her father – Otomo Yoshiaki.....after being replaced by a stepmother, Shiohoshimaru was separated from her father and chased out from Otomo clan mansion where she spent time with her real mother.

The stepmother give birth to a son and before long, Shioichimaru was born.

He is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Otouto for Shiohoshimaru.

Soon after Otomo Yoshihaki and his wife disinherited the legitimate child – Shiohoshimaru, the whole Otomo clan start making Shioichimaru as the heir. Such rumors began to flow.....

A feud for succession of clan of the same family was fated in samurai clan in Sengoku era. Especially with daimyos that governed countries, a feud for

succession of the clan directly linked with the clan's life and death crisis. Therefore, because the custom of legitimate child succession and princess generals were half-institutionalized, it were possible for certain to disinherited Shiohoshimaru who lost her real mother.

*“why is it.....”*

Shiohoshimaru murmured while looking at the sea of Bungo.

*“.....my Oka-sama came from the other side of this sea.....she is a bride from Ouchi clan of Yamaguchi.....”*

The conqueror of Chugoku of the other side of the sea is Ouchi clan. They are an old enemy of Otomo clan. To put it simply, it was political marriage. As her mother dies, the alliance between the two clan were in half-cancelation state. The time for battle is approaching. Her father who is the head of Otomo clan were pestered by her Gibu to make her own son to succeed the Otomo clan. There was a possibility that Shiohoshimaru who shares a blood lineage with the enemy nation would be judged as “unnecessary”. Right now, the Otomo clan retainers with the faction that thoroughly recommend Shioichimaru to be the legitimate child combined as a faction that would disinherit Shiohoshimaru who descended from Ouchi clan.

(I wonder if Otou-san will kill me)

Shiohoshimaru was too clever to reign over the country of Shura – Kyushu as a daimyo. Her mind doesn't match with her age and are also exceedingly sensitive. Since her stepmother think of herself as unpleasant, she understood that she will be driven out from the mansion.

A way of life through a battle for the family inheritance during chaotic times. A way of life where one will be disinherited and killed by the hand of their father. Both seemed to be a thorny path.

(I hate both of those future. I'm scared.....why was I born in the clan of the king of Bungo? Rather than inside of this sea. Which is where my real mother entered the land of dead)

However, it wasn't possible to sink herself into the sea. Shiohoshimaru doesn't have any courage to take her own life. Live. She want to live, nevertheless. Even if she doesn't have any wish for the future at all, she doesn't want to die in such world of Shura. its scary to die. She want to live and see her own happiness.

As such, for that time, Shiohoshimaru met 3 old women who looked like a mirage across the sea. Perhaps it was a coincidence?

Those old women. Are the real or an illusion?'

A demoness. Or is it a Seko that travels around the mountain and the rivers. It was an embodiment of people's spirits that were called as Kawahime.  
River Princess

*""Ojou-chan. We are the messenger of Usa Hachiman-jin. We will foretell Ojou-chan's future""*

*I shouldn't listen. If I listen, my soul will be tied by the old women's prophecy for lifetime. This is black arts. A curse. These three person are people who weld grudge with Otomo clan. Perhaps, a shaman who destroyed Otomo's mansion. A demoness. "Kotodama-Tsukai". No, It could be a spy from Ouchi clan. Its likely to deceive and manipulate me who descend from Ouchi clan. To make me usurp the family inheritance of Otomo clan and make Otomo clan as a puppet to Ouchi clan. The head temple of Usa Hachiman-jin – Usa Hachimangu is hostile to Otomo clan and joined under the jurisdiction of Ouchi clan.*  
User of Soul of Language

The intelligent Shiohoshimaru reasoned so. But for some reason, she couldn't take off her eyes and ears and weren't able to leave the place.

(even though there may be a political scheme behind these old women, the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin are certainly true. For some reason, I have a hunch like that. Aah. I shouldn't listen. The moment I heard it, this prophecy will begun to live inside me)

*Ever since I lost my Oka-sama, I have live in anxiety all this time*

*What would happen to me tomorrow. One year after that. Five years later. Ten years later. For the princess such as me who was born during the chaotic era, there is only a future of ignorant darkness.*

*Rather being scared by an invisible future, I should've known it beforehand, so that I can prepare for it no matter what kind of heinous the future will be. If I can prepare for it, I can tolerate it. That's why.*

*I want to know my future.*

The prophecy of the 3 old women has penetrated the gap within the heart.

*"listen. When the second floor of the mansion collapses...Ojou-chan will, after*  
*Father*  
*Chichi-oya, Gibu and Otouto who doesn't love Ojou-chan will be killed, you will become the queen of Bungo"*

*"your Otouto who threaten Ojou-chan's family inheritance, all of them will be killed. The sea of this region, the town and the mansion, all of them shall become Ojou-chan's possessions"*

*"the future will turn into what Ojou-chan hoped for"*

*It wasn't possible to raise her voice. it was a shock that grabs her hearts. Murder? I will? Ochichi-sama? Ogibu-sama? All of my Otoutos? That was.....really.....my wish?*

From this moment, the childish heart of Shiohoshimaru withered because of the fate that are more scary than a future of ignorant darkness.....

*"it wasn't only Bungo. Ojou-chan will become the conqueror of Kyushu who rules six countries of Kyushu – Buzen, Bungo, Chikuzen, Chikugo, Hizen and Higo. You completely live in great luxury as the queen of this world"*

*"that fame even came to the far namban countries. Its destiny that Ojou-chan can't avoid"*

*"there is no limit in what Ojou-chan hold in you small heart"*

She is caught by the Kotodama and tied up.

It wasn't just a simple words. Even if she want to shake off the Kotodama, it wasn't possible to escape the irreparable despair from being imprisoned by the fate of that prophecy. A new terror appeared on Shiohoshimaru's expression. And it make her heart frozen.

*"however, the glorious day will come to an end. When the forest of Hyuga start attacking, Ojou-chan's glory upon the earth will come to an end there"*

*"if that is so, even with snow fallen on the fiery battlefield, as long as there is no Otouto submerged in the water as a sacrifice, Ojou-chan wouldn't be able to escape from that calamitous destiny"*

*"in the ancient era of mythology, in order to save Yamato Takeru in his expedition to <sup>Eastern Countries</sup> Togoku that are cursed by Watatsumi, his wife Ototachibanahime jump into the water herself and calmed Watatsumi down....."*

Shiohoshimaru denied the old women's prophecy while crying. She thought that she doesn't need such dark future.

*"I.....absolutely never.....killed my own family! If I commit such grave sin.....my heart would never feel at ease anymore! In spite of being alive, that is merely a foolish imitation of being damned into hell eternally. No matter who told me that, I would not do it! Its better to be killed by my Otou-san.....! Because being killed will last for a moment. If I murder them, I will keep suffering for a long time! To say nothing of killing my Otouto as a sacrifice. I would never do such thing.....!"*

The old women disappeared gradually while shaking like a mirage and laughed "kukuku".....

*"you are resisting the fate. Even if you didn't kill your family. Even if you protect all of your Otoutos"*

*"after all you yourself will become the very same thing you wish to suppress"*



*“that is destiny, it’s the future. the future is established by the karma from the past.....it cannot be changed by human’s power”*

And soon.....

“Nikaikuzurenohen” occurred.

At the end of factional dispute over the disinheritance of Shiohoshimaru.....Shiohoshimaru’s father and stepmother, Shioichimaru whom her mother bore, every one of them, was murdered by the rebels who attacked the Otomo clan mansion.

The murder occurred at the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Otomo mansion. Therefore, it was called “Nikaikuzurenohen”.

When this coup d’etat occurred and while Shiohoshimaru was trembling in fear due to the forthcoming future, she was separated from Otomo mansion by the order of her father. She was in panic and shut herself inside Beppu hotspring. The prophecy were proved right. *“I myself didn’t try to stop the future even though I had known about it. I didn’t fight to change the future. it’s the same as murdering my Ochichi-sama”* Shiohoshimaru blame her own cowardice.

Shiohoshimaru who is the legitimate child has survived and were given the family inheritance of Otomo clan and became the young queen of Bungo.

Shiohoshimaru who became the present master of 21<sup>st</sup> generation of Otomo clan had her named changed into Otomo Yoshishige.

Hetsugi Akitsura of warrior faction who is the loyal retainer among the loyal retainers that serve Otomo clan, pitied upon this poor princess who shouldered such severe destiny *“as long as I still have my life, Hime-sama doesn’t need to worry anything!”* cheering her and he take her under his protection. Every disloyal retainers who scheme for rebellion and disdained Yoshishige who seem unreliable and burdened with rumors as the “Chichi-Goroshi”, he suppresses them one by one by using military might.

Father Killer

However, Yoshishige cannot trust Hetsugi Akitsura from the bottom of her heart.

*I cannot believe in myself. I cannot believe that there is goodness inside my heart. I let my Chichi, Gibo and Otouto to death in order to survive, that's the kind of person I am. A retainers won't love such lord. Hetsugi Akitsura as well, will be disgusted with me and soon decided to betray me eventually.*

*Besides.....there is one person, an Otouto is left for me. My Otouto called Shiootomaru. This child own a great luck that made him escaped from the fate of that prophecy and survived. He is also brave. Sooner or later, Hetsugi Akitsura and all retainers will brought Shiootomaru as the new lord and force me to retirement. Perhaps, I might be killed. In fact, it's a last moment that is suitable for me. Its impossible for me to become the queen of six countries of Kyushu.*

(if its like that, then so be it. I will throw away my position as the queen of Bungo for the sake of Shiootomaru. And then, my sin will be absolved...)

But it was decided that fate will swoop down upon Shiootomaru.

The real mother of Yoshishige and Shiootomaru came from the conqueror of Chugoku region – the Ouchi clan.

In the first place, the movement that come from Otomo's own clan to disinherit Yoshishige was because Yoshishige descended from their old enemy – Ouchi clan.

But all of the anti-Yoshishige faction which became disadvantageous because of “Nikaikuzurenohen” has lost their position after being completely suppressed by Hetsugi Akitsura.

Yoshishige who became the present head of Otomo clan ought to stabilize the relationship between Otomo clan and Ouchi clan that were in sharp conflict over the years regarding the dominion over Hakata which is the largest trade port of Kyushu. There is no expectation that both clan would fight each other already. Yoshishige believed in it at least.

However, the Sengoku era was the age of usurpation.

Even the lord....even the conqueror of Chugoku region.....would have lost their life tomorrow.

The present head of Ouchi clan – Ouchi Yoshitaka was suddenly...betrayed by a retainer called Sue Harukata and was murdered.

Sue Harukata who committed the crime of murdering her master offered to put Yoshishige's Otouto – Shiootomaru who inherit the lineage of Ouchi clan to become the present head of the new Ouchi clan, all in order to usurp the Ouchi clan.

*"if Sue Harukata's request is rejected, then a battle against Sue clan will begin. There is no such time for the current Otomo clan"*

*"however Sue Harukata is a murderer of her own master. If we let such person to deceive Shiootomaru-sama, Shiootomaru-sama will be used as a puppet. In Chugoku region, there is generals who keep appearing one after another with an ambition to become the new conqueror by defeating Sue clan. If its like that then Shiootomaru-sama life will be in danger"*

*"wait a moment. If Sue Harukata welcomes Shiootomaru-sama into Ouchi clan then she will offered to cede Hakata port in Chikuzen that Ouchi clan own to Otomo clan"*

*"if Hakata is obtained, Otomo clan will get enormous wealth by trade!"*

*"Ouchi clan who has lost their number one commander of Nishikoku – Ouchi Yoshitaka has no any reserve energy to dispatched troops to Kyushu. Hakata can be stolen anytime!"*

*"however.....our lord.....she hates battles"*

The Otomo retainers group was thrown into commotion once again.

Then someone unexpected came to Otomo clan who is swallowed up by wars and whirlpool of usurpation.

It was a stranger.

Missionary of Dominus association who came across the seven seas from the far away Europe to visit the missionary works in Zipang.

He is Francis Xavier.

Yoshishige who keep frightened by the prophecy of the 3 old women who call themselves the messenger of Usa Hachiman-jin, devote herself into Zen Buddhism.....Buddhism – the religion of Japan since ancient times.....a religion where samurai has converted into since the time of Kamakura period. she was desperate to continued studying Zen meditation and reaching enlightenment. The Zen Buddhism in certain meaning is a religion of aiding oneself. The <sup>Esoteric Buddhism</sup> Mikkyo that focuses on the art of exorcism and curses which the noble aristocrat are devoting themselves into, the <sup>Pure Land Buddhism</sup> Jodo-shu faction of the new religion that believe that Amitabha Buddha wholeheartedly try to save the people (Honbyo temple is derived from this Jodo-shu as well), none of them match Yoshishige's character who respected intelligent. As for Zen Buddhism that seeks enlightenment inside oneself, seem to be suitable for Yoshishige but Zen Buddhism didn't save her as well.

Certainly Yoshishige has high intelligence and sharp sensitivity. She has overflowing talent as a cultured person rather than a warrior. However at the same time, her experience when she was going to be avoided by her father and disinherited when she was young and then inside Yoshishige there is a scar that would not heal with a sense of guilt of letting her Otouto and father die without fighting against the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin, these intense emotion cannot stop swirled around her heart and cannot be keep in check. That is *"I want to be approved by someone, I want to be loved"* it may be said as her earnest desire. The desire to be approved. its not possible to be found inside oneself.

But Yoshishige has yet to know about Xavier about Christianity. The official reason why Yoshishige had an audience with Xavier was because of her interest with Tanegashimas and salt peter brought by namban trade.

Xavier who visited Otomo clan mansion was a slender young man with handsome features. He was probably an aristocrat in namban country. But, he is awfully older than his actual age.

Naturally, he was not a man with a strong body. The long sea voyage and the strange climate of Japan seem to beaten up his body.

Besides, he is a handsome man. a person who own a different characteristic with the people of japan. the color of his skin and eyes is different from the people of japan. *“he own a sorrowful expression.....perhaps he is a vagrant”* Yoshishige intuitively knew.

*“Otomo-sama. My name is Francis Xavier. For the sake of king of Portugal, I cross over by ship from western Europe to India through Africa, then to Malacca and then to this island of Zipangu of far east in order to do Christian missionary works”*

*“you are a Portuguese?”*

*“no. my father was a noble of Basque. He serve as the prime minister of Navarra kingdom.....as for the kingdom where I was born and raised, they are no longer exist. It has been in ruin. I am a person of an extinct country. Perhaps the reason I becoming a Christian missionary and roamed around the earth is because I am aware that a kingdom above the earth is like a fleeting mirage. That is why I am fascinated by the kingdom of the heaven – the kingdom of souls.....and then at the same time, I am attracted to this golden country Zipangu that stood on the boundaries of the world across the end of far east seas where none has seen before. There is a legendary king of Christians in the kingdom Prester John in the far east. I wanted to know the truth behind the legendary oriental savior – Prester John who led a large army to free Europe from the menace of the pagan country – Ottoman Empire”*

(over the seas of Hakata, not only Ming china and Ryukyu but there is a wide open world in the distance) Yoshishige are aware of that astounding truth.

*“Xavier-sama. Unfortunately japan is not a golden country. You must have already known that the Shogunate has lost its authority. Samurai keep killing each other from Kyushu to Oashuu. The retainers try to kill their master through usurpation. Especially at Kyushu of japan, parents, children and their brothers tried to kill each other without questions. It’s the country of Shuras.....can these chaotic age be brought to an end by the power of namban god that you brought in?”*

*“the thing that god protect is silence. He doesn’t directly build a kingdom above the earth. But I am inspired by hero that brought up European civilization. Is possibly appear in Zipangu”* Xavier smiles.

*“at first I landed at Satsuma and begun missionary works in the territory of Shimazu clan but the influence of Buddhist monk in Shimazu clan is strong so missionary works was impossible. Next I go to Ouchi-sama of Yamaguchi who is the supreme ruler of western japan. I sails from Yamaguchi though the Setouchi and to Sakai. And finally from Sakai to Kyoto”*

*“but there is no heroes at Kyoto. Be it Yamato-Gosho or the Ashikaga shogunate.....”*

*“.....to our regret. There is only ruin beyond recognition. The golden capital was a burning field. But in Sakai, I found a young princess general who has a capacity to become a hero. That person is the legitimate child of Oda clan of Owari. Otomo-sama, she was somewhat similar to you. her soul is violent, it was dried and thirst for love, full of anger and sorrow to this chaotic era. That person is possibly the person who will become the hero who brought the wars in Zipang to and end”*

*“the Oda clan of Owari is just a small daimyo. Is it impossible for me to unify the whole country?”* Yoshishige unintentionally got angry.

*“a battle is something that stole the lives of allies and enemies. Be it vassal or families, its necessary to scatter the live of the population. The gentle and delicate Otomo-sama wouldn’t be able to endure the penance to offer of her lives to war until its exhausted”*

*“ever since I became a princess daimyo, I keep endure intolerable things. Because if I don’t fight, I can’t survive. Moreover.....that legitimate child of Oda clan, are able to endure a lifetime of boundless battle. Is she more superior in being a military commander than me?”*

*“although she is a very strong person, she is the same with Otomo-sama to the point that her true character is that of a gentle person. Sooner or later, her heart will fall*

*at the end of wars. However, if another person would appear as the shield to support her heart, then.....”*

*“nee, Xavier-sama. You are a saint right? Can you predict the future? I can understand from a glance that you are an owner of noble character. But do you have ability to predict the future?”*

*“prophecy...is it? Certainly in religion there is omen of goodness and misfortune along with concept of god. The thing we called religion is to bring peace to the people’s hearts by pointing out the path to those who doesn’t know what will happen tomorrow. Usa Hachiman-jin has passed on oracles to an extent that it greatly affected the histories, Jewish prophet are also left many prophecies. As for the human’s hearts, we desire to be dominated by fate while on the other way around there is who pursue freedom and not being tied with fate”*

*“that is logical. When I’m young, there is 3 old women who claim as the messenger of Usa Hachiman-jin and told me a prophecy. Half of it has already been fulfilled. As for me, the content of the prophecy.....I have been frightened all this time by the destiny that has been given to me. The content of that prediction hasn’t been to anyone. If its known to someone, the words would circulate through the retainers group of Otomo clan. Perhaps it would actually happened.....But, if its Xavier-sama, I could tell you”*

*“.....let’s hear it. I promise that I would not leak it to anybody”*

Thus, Yoshishige told the entire content of the prophecy to Xavier.

Because of “Nikaikuzurenohen”, her father, stepmother and her younger stepbrother were killed by the retainers and Yoshishige who should’ve disinherited from the Otomo clan has become the queen of Bungo.

Regardless of what Yoshishige wanted, she will become the queen of six countries that is half of the entire of Kyushu eventually. She would prosper above the earth but when the forest of Hyuga start advancing then Yoshishige’s prosperity above the earth will end right there.

Yoshishige herself didn't hope for the glory above the earth as the queen of six countries.

She was only wishing for a peace for her heart.

*"Xavier-sama. I left my Ochichi-sama to die even though I know the prophecy. Is this a crime?"*

*"no. Otomo-sama has already suffered enough. My lord Jesus shouldered the sins of humankind because he receives the punishment at the cross"*

*"one of the reason why I am interested in Christianity is because when Jesus is caught, there is a passage that predicted his student – Peter's betrayal. "tonight, before the chicken cries, you would say that you don't know me thrice". And Peter really did betray Jesus who has been captured. Peter was questioned by people three times and he said that didn't know about Jesus.....when the chicken cries, Peter remembered Jesus's prophecy and he cried intensely.....the cowardly traitor Peter. I felt like I am totally like him. Its similar to how I seclude myself at Beppu hotsprings while letting my Ochichi-sama and Otouto even though I knew about the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin. Tell me Xavier-sama. Is it possible for the Christians prophecy to overtun Usa Hachiman-jin prophecy?"*

*"Otomo-sama. The prophecy is something that only oneself can found within one's own mind. The word that has been given is only the trigger. Both Peter and you.....have found the conscience within oneself. And you both grieved for your weakness for not being able to fulfill that conscience and cried. If there is no conscience, then both Peter and you wouldn't felt grieve nor hurt"*

*".....the prophecy that he betrayed 3 times before the chicken cries is very scary. Furthermore, it feels like the same thing will happened again. For me there is only one person, there is an Otouto who escaped the prophecy and survives. That child's name is Shiootomaru. Right now, Shiootomaru are being requested to become the present head of Ouchi clan of Yamaguchi.....Sue Harukata who killed the lord of Yamaguchi – Ouchi Yoshitaka are going to make that child as a puppet. Should part with my Otouto? Or should I continue keeping him without releasing him?"*



*"Otomo-sama. Unfortunately, I have no power to predict the future. I also can't foretell the fate of Shiootomaru-sama.....whether destiny is being set by the god or it can be changed by human's will and action, this is a difficult problem that hasn't been solved by Christendom as well. ancient catholic believe in the value of human's free will. But the reformist who denied the authority of catholic church, the one so called protestant.....are also the person who advocates "predestination". The human's destiny about whom is saved and whom is not has been decided beforehand"*

*".....which one is the truth?!"*

*"unfortunately, human being cannot understand that. Its because a human being are not omniscience or omnipotence. There is no choice but to choose it ourselves. But I.....believed that there should be a free will choose our own fate, be it good or evil for human being, the fate that awaits human being that are established without end shouldn't be completely fixed. Not only Dominus association where do I belong since I am a catholic.....I myself want to believe the power of human will"*

*"human's own will fighting each other to determine the fate. That is the law of this nature, as what Xavier-sama is saying, right? Then where is the peace at my heart?"*

*"Otomo-sama. A human's life is but a split second dream when compared to this whole vast universe. In terms of the oriental anecdote, its like a dream of a butterfly. Therefore.....because it was only a transient dream, we must keep on fighting and resist fate, as long as we have our life, both you and me. From now on, no matter what kind of religion or gods or human being that you believe in, you mustn't abandon your will. A human being is not a puppet"*

*".....its better to become a puppet.....they might be happy"*

Xavier spoke quietly to Yoshishige who keep suffering from the prophecy and her sense of guilt.

*"Shiootomaru-sama fate as well must be chosen by Shiootomaru-sama himself. Even if it would result in tragedy. As for you, your decision to protect Shiootomaru-sama from the prophecy will be respected. If you choose and acted in it then its fine.*

*As the result, you aren't supposed to blame yourself even if you can't overturn the prophecy"*

*"but. If Shiootomaru dies, I would certainly be broken. If the prophecy was only words and a lie, if these are just a plot from the enemy country to drag Otomo clan into confusion.....I want to believe that was the case....."*

*"Otomo-sama. Although I cannot make prophecy.....its possible for me to make a prediction. Sooner or later, a person will appeared, the one who will eventually heal the wound in your heart, a person who come from an extraordinary world that is beyond your and my imagination. As I came from Lisbon on the reverse side of this globe to this Bungo"*

*"please wait a moment. If its Xavier-sama, you should be able to heal my wound. You should prove that the old women prophecy were just an ordinary words. Xavier-sama, won't you stay at Bungo?"*

Xavier apologizes while smiling.

*"Otomo-sama. My life will not last much longer"*

*".....it can't be.....?!"*

*"now. the missionary work program at the major power of the Ming china at Dominus association has been making progress. Now that I have took some part in missionary work at Zipang, I am considered as needed in Ming china. I will probably receive an order to be summoned soon. If I refuse that order, the vanguard forces of Conquistador faction will advance and colonize Ming china in order to take the foreign country with missionary works. Therefore, I must go. I return to India in order to do missionary works at Ming china. When I turn back to Ming china, my life will come to an end on my way back"*

*"that is, isn't that a bad fate?! Why do you wish to accomplish it? I don't understand"*

*"unfortunately, the state of my body has been calculated through medical calculation. My life expectancy has been prolonged after I forcibly push myself for*

*my dream of reaching Zipang alive. Its by using the elixir of alchemy. The effect of the elixir will soon break”*

*“you are a cruel person. For all the gentle words that you said, please don’t leave me at Bungo just like that. Make sure that you will return” Yoshishige told him.*

*“Otomo-sama. You are equal or possibly more passionate than the princess of Owari. The person that you truly need is not a religious person like me who abandon the love between man and woman, the one who abandon the secular affairs and offered it to neighborly love.....”*

*“a man who will love me? That is impossible! Its impossible for a princess daimyo who was born in Sengoku era to have a pure love that surpasses the wall of politics and status. They will never be united with a retainer. A marriage permitted to princess daimyo are actually just a political marriage between countries. Such things like love can only be found in “The Tales of Genji” Xavier-sama”*

.....

.....

.....

Xavier..... left for India after receiving order from Dominus association.

One year after he left japan, his body suddenly weaken and its said that he died.

And Yoshishige who believed that she can be emancipated from the fate of the prophecy that cursed the Otomo clan, send Shiootomaru to Ouchi clan.

Yoshishige were once gave up sending Shiootomaru to Ouchi clan before she had talked with Xavier.

She changed her mind about some way of protecting Shiootomaru from the prophecy by keeping him at hand without moving him out from Otomo clan. After all, Shiootomaru possess great luck that allowed him to escape Nikaikuzurenohen.

But, Shiootomaru who is carefree and optimistic at everything *"I want to go to Ouchi clan"* asked Yoshishige.

*"Aneue! I was originally would become an adopted child for Ouchi clan! At that time there was various reason that I would become an adopted child but those reason were scrapped. But now I am called to become the present head of Ouchi clan so this must be fate! After I inherited Ouchi clan, I will set up a residence at Yamaguchi and support my Aneue!"*

Although Yoshishige was harsh on him so that he will obediently keep close to her, it was because she doesn't want to lose her family and be parted from her cute Otouto in Nikaikuzurenohen. Now that Xavier who can support and believed her has left Japan, the only one whom Yoshishige can trust as a family are only Hiootomaru.

*"Shiootomaru. In every known path of Kyushu are accompanied with endless battles. even if you are in dire situation, I might not be able to send reinforcement"*

*"it will be alright desu! Though it might happen, I won't bear grudge against Aneue desu!"*

*"besides Sue Harukata will only make you a puppet. She will never give you the real power of Ouchi clan. Are you fine being placed as a figurehead?"*

*"hai desu!" because I am weak and incompetent in both governance and battle, I will have no problem! Rather the retainers will do the works for the lord desu"*

*"Sue Harukata is a general that usurped the Ouchi clan. Once their government is stabilized, you will become unnecessary. she might kill you"*

*"I hear that Sue-san made a careless usurpation when she was tangled with blind with Ouchi Yoshitaka who is her master and lover! Because its unthinkable that I would have such relationship with Sue-san then it will be alright! For me Aneue is the woman that I like desu!"*

*"the Otomo and Ouchi clan will be united by us – Aneue and her Otouto. If this dream could come true then I am fine being a figurehead! I will commit myself to*

*request Sue-san to protect Aneue! With this way, Aneue will be safe!"* Shiootomaru kept talking about that dream cheerfully. Yoshishige weren't aware that Shiootomaru has considering it himself until this point. *"I understand"* she unintentionally nodded. If she were to opened up her heart and spend a long time talking to her Otouto, maybe this won't be happening. She regretted it.

*".....if it all in vain and you were in danger, return to Bungo immediately. Even if you inherited the Ouchi clan, your parent's house is in Otomo clan"*

*"thank you desu!"*

Shiootomaru's cheerful smile is the last thing that Yoshishige saw from her last Otouto.

As if it was a fate, Shiootomaru lost his life as soon as he entered Ouchi clan.

Sue Harukata who brought Shiootomaru as the present head of Ouchi clan fought Mori Motonari who is just a small lord at Aki at the battle of Itsukushima and died tragically.

Mori Motonari contrived a plot against the retainers of Otomo clan one after another so that they would start a rebellion in order to stop Yoshishige's movement to send troops to Chugoku region to rescue her Otouto. For Mori Motonari who takes pride for his ingenious scheme and was feared as the <sup>God of Strategy</sup> *"Hakarigoto-jin"*, it was easy to make a revolt in Yoshishige's foothold. The suspicion about Yoshishige killing her father and Otouto are still impossible to be erased. In addition, after Xavier leave Japan, she keep treating Christian really well by protecting Christianity and building namban church and hospital one after another in the region. When Otomo retainers group who are the passionate believers of Buddhism and Usa Hachiman-jin were stirred up just a little, it burst to flame immediately. The young Yoshishige doesn't have power to seize the retainers group. Although she reign as the queen of Bungo and governed the retainers, she doesn't have volition to mercilessly purge them. To speak it simply, the kind hearted girl – Yoshishige who doesn't like war were being underestimated by the Shuras of Kyushu.

Yoshishige were attacked by the rebel army in the region and were escaping in confusion while being frightened.....

Shiootomaru was cornered by Mori forces and committed suicide after losing his guardian – Sue Harukata who is the virtual ruler of Ouchi clan.

After Sue collapse, the retainers that supported Shiootomaru from Otomo clan were leaving Ouchi clan. They went over to Mori clan one after another. The crafty Mori Motonari arrested Shiootomaru and kept him alive and made him a bargaining chip for negotiation against Otomo clan. He intended to exchange Shiootomaru with the sovereignty over Hakata port. But *“Hakata port will not be handed over. Rather than being a burden for my Aneue then.....”* Shiootomaru refuse surrendering and cut his stomach.....

*“damn it. The Mori clan will be burdened to shoulder this karma”* Mori Motonari regretted deeply and thus Yoshishige has lost her real Otouto who survived *“Nikaikuzurenohen”*.

A letter of apology was sent *“even though I did not take his life, he still passed away, that’s why I apologize”* along with Ouchi clan treasured tea set – Ouchi gourd from Mori Motonari who tried to prevent this situation into a deep grudge between Otomo and Mori clan.

But the people of Bungo that knew about this told that Otomo Yoshisige exchange her Otouto with tea set and left him to die.

The prophecy has once again fulfilled.

Xavier who has died according to his own words at the other side of the sea. Her last Otouto who survived Nikaikuzurenohen has died. Rebels that keep appearing one after another in the country due to Mori Motonari’s plot. It was a tragedy that was too much to break Yoshishige’s heart who cannot stand the tension of bloody battle.

Mori Motonari who plundered the territory of Ouchi clan and become the conqueror of Chugoku region against the cowardly young girl called Otomo Yoshishige who bears a grudge for herself of letting her own Otouto die yet cannot

take up a spear in order to deny herself. Now that it come to this, he had begun to move out to plunder Hakata port and start their earnest wish to make trade with the namban before Otomo clan can arrange their defenses.

However.

*“human’s own will fighting each other to determine the fate. That is the law of nature of this world”*

Without forgetting Xavier’s faith in her heart, Yoshishige mustered up her courage while gritting her teeth. She gathered the veteran general – Hetsugi Akitsura and went on a full scale rivalry with Shiootomaru’s enemy – Mori Motonari.

Yoshishige’s sadness of letting her Otouto die has changed into anger against Mori Motonari.

It was the moment that Mori Motonari’s pride as the number one ingenious person of western country were stripped away.

Only the town of Hakata that has a port that connected to the namban. the Mori clan aren’t allowed to take it.

If Hakata falls to the hands of Mori clan, then the connection with Xavier will be severed.

Xavier is longer alive anymore. He has died.

However he left words to Yoshishige.

(sooner or later, a person will appeared, the one who will eventually heal the wound in your heart)

Xavier’s word has supported Yoshishige.

Yoshishige decided to fight against her own fate and survived until that person would come.

Thus a grand battle between Otomo and Mori clan has begun in the frontline of Moji castle at Buzen.....

Mori clan who seek a trade with the namban has advanced to Hakata. Moji castle cannot be lost as the base for Mori clan at Kyushu.

Yoshishige must recapture Moji castle send Mori army away from Kyushu in order to defend Hakata.

Mori Motonari has sent his youngest daughter Kobayakawa Takakage to rescue Moji castle which were surrounded by Otomo army. Takakage is renowned as a resourceful general who is inferior with her twin Ane – Kikkawa Motoharu in prowess. Because the brave general – Kikkawa Motoharu rushed into anti-Amago front at San'in region, Kobayakawa Takakage would be chosen as the representative of anti-Otomo war. In addition, the strongest Murakami navies in Setouchi had arrived with Takakage. The power of navies are important in the battle between Chugoku and Kyushu. There is no naval forces which are stronger than Murakami navies in Japan. But, Yoshishige were also preparing a secret plan to defeat Murakami navy.

...

...

Kobayakawa Takakage who appeared for the battle of Moji castle had accomplished rapid growth as a princess general after having survived a decisive battle of Mori clan – the battle of Itsukushima.

Grumbling yet doting father – Mori Motonari. Older sister who is proud of her bravery – Kikkawa Motoharu. And now a rare virtuous Anni – Mori Takamoto. They always have supported her weak back ever since then.

(Chichiue's dream. That is Mori family being united. My Anniue. As the one who reign over the country.....only my Anniue who can give benevolence to everyone without compensation that can become the hero who will put an end to this war of Japan. Even if it's inevitable that I killed Sue Harukata who murder her own master or even if it's a pity that Shiootomaru who is innocent and only a figurehead of Ouchi clan have been left to die.....even so, for Anniue, I will take my life and fought



magnificently for the sake of conquering the world no matter how terrible and cruel the battlefield will be)

That desire.....trust to the family and the will of making Takamoto as the ruler of the world have brought the timid Takakage into a full-fledged soldier. But *“rather than being a hostage then...”* since Shiootomaru has committed suicide, anxiety came to stagnate in Takakage’s feelings. Although Sengoku era is decided by the law of survival of the fittest, when it comes to Mori clan.....maybe Takamoto which was the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Mori clan would need to bear that responsibility.

Aboard the flagship of Murakami navies and while looking at Otomo’s large army that surround Moji castle on deck, *“what is that Takeyoshi?”* Kobayakawa Takakage involuntarily asked the general of Murakamai navy – Murakami Takeyoshi.

A never seen before strange jet black ship bombarded Moji castle from the sea by using an enormous tube like gun that look like a monster.

Cannon  
*“Ojou. That is the namban Oodzutsu. That aren’t a junk ship that came from Ming china. It’s a genuine Portuguese ships that came across the sea from the namban to japan”*

*“that Otomo Ojou-chan have done unexpected thing. that bastard Motonari has underestimated Otomo clan. This will be a hard fight more than expected”* the king of Pirate – Murakami Takeyoshi roared with laughter and patted small Takakage’s back while heartily chewing on raw oyster and grain.

*“cough\* cough\*. Isn’t it feel painful? Be a little bit easy Takeyoshi”*

*“sorry, sorry. Kobayakawa Ojou is like a quiet flower. Its different from Kikkawa Ojou. You should eat more oyster, oyster you know! If you don’t eat it, it won’t become big”*

*“.....I refuse. If I eat raw food I will get stomachache. But Takeyoshi. Why does Portuguese ships bombarding the great Mori’s castle? The Portuguese who visited japan along with the Christians missionary should’ve just a merchant right? I never heard any namban ship being used as part of military personnel”*

*“the namban navigate the great ocean across the end of India to Luzon at the risk of their life. its impossible not to armed themselves with weapon. After all they have to pass through the sea where there is battles stretching through the seas. In other words, the collapse of the army wouldn’t be decided by the large number of military personnel that come aboard the ships”*

*“.....I see. But we cannot tolerate Otomo clan to bring namban soldier in the battles between warriors of japan. if we let namban to intervene in the war, japan would gradually be plundered by them eventually. That Otomo princess. Even though she is determined to avenge her Otouto against Mori clan by using clever scheme, she didn’t think about the consequences at all. Its an extreme things to do.....somehow, it seem that the princess daimyo has going through a lot of emotional breakdown more than what we can imagined”*

Ouchi Yoshitaka had protected Christianity but the new conqueror of Chugoku that replaces Ouchi clan – Mori Motonari did not adopt active pro-chistianity policy. Of course, Motonari are not an obstinate ideologist of isolationism. To strengthened the Mori clan even further and overlook the whole world. Obtaining Hakata port and open a trade with the namban. There is such ambition to secure millions of wealth and namban modern weapons. Therefore he didn’t actively suppress the Christians but if the Europeans intervene in the battle involving the enemy of Mori clan then it would be a different story.

*“well then, what should we do Ojou?”*

*“sent a letter to the captain of that namban ship and persuade him to withdraw. If they got involved in a battle with Mori clan, then Christian missionary works and trade would already become impossible at japan. don’t get involved with the military affairs of this country”*

*“still being calm as expected. But how could we tell them with letter? After all the enemies are a foreigner”*

*“.....although tis scary but this is a serious matter concerning the future of japan. then I myself will personally board it and handed out the letter”*

*“wawa. Although your mouth are saying brave things your legs are trembling Takakage”*

Motonaru who expected a severe battle are worried about Takakage.

A man who bring a new naval reinforcement for the Mori clan stood next to Takakage.

Its Takakage's Ani – Mori Takamoto.

*“A-Aniue? Why are you here?”*

*“its Oyaji-dono's order. Since he was worried about Takakage, he can't sleep at night for some reason and keep grumbling badly and thus I who has a lot of free time come as the reserve army”*

*“I-I am already a full-fledged princess general. I-I also have accurately led the navy to fight to the bitter end at the battle of Itsukushima. Too o-overprotective! Aniue's assistance are not needed”*

*“don't say that. I serve as a messenger for the namban ship. We are the same human being. if we talk frankly then a language barrier won't be a problem. We can tell them that trade and missionary works will be in vain if they intervened in military affairs of japan”*

*“Aniue. That's no good. Its dangerous”*

*“sometimes behaves like a spoiled child to your Aniki obediently. I am worthless at battle. If we make the namban ship withdraw from the sea, it will go under your command. There is a lot of army in Otomo forces which they don't seem able to control. Because the princess daimyo of Otomo clan doesn't have any brothers.....there is nobody that can led the army. I am hesitant to say this but the Mori clan has defeat one Otouto of that person”*

*“.....Aniue. If the Otomo princess appeared on the battlefield, then even I who is a cold blooded commander will likely would fight. But I think that the princess of Otomo clan would never come out at the frontline. She has a frail character by nature and its said that she can't endure the tension of battles. because of tthe*

*anger of having her Otouto be defeated by Mori clan made her moves with obstinate tenacity in this battle. She is a princess who originally doesn't like battles. furthermore that person, has neither an Ani nor Ane to entrust her back on the frontline of the battlefield....."*

*"that's right Takakage. The Otomo clan aren't blessed with family luck. But well, it can be said that the Mori clan who has two Imouto excessively yearning on their Aniki is a bit strange"*

*"I-I-I don't think like that to A-A-Aniue! B-because Aniue is weak, I-I, it mean that its no good for you to stand up as the vanguard, that is, in other word, j-just shut up!!"*

*"yeah yeah. I will be silent"*

*"Aniue. You must properly come back alive. If you got killed you will die"*

*"yeah yeah. I die when being killed"*

*"ugh. Aniue is looking at me with lukewarm eyes. A-at this rate, my impression as a cold blooded commander will.....d-don't pat my head!"*

*"naa, Takakage. I like your gentle heart that consider the heart of the enemy general but that gentleness will be fatal on the battlefield. Anyhow, your Oni-chan is worried"*

*"I-I am not a gentle and sweet person. I am called the cold blooded commander!"*

*"gahaha. When seeing the enemy's line, as expected they are soldiers of Kyushu of Shuras. Although they are braver than Ashigaru of Mori clan, the Bungo navy are not a concern. As long as the Oodzutsu of Portuguese ship disappear, they won't be a match with Murakami navy" Takeyoshi laughed.*

*"leave the negotiation with the namban to Takamoto. This is only the beginning of Mori taking over the world. Advance to Kitakyushu and steal Hakata port and destroy the Amago clan at San'in region as well. from there is the start of the battles proceeding to the capital. The 2<sup>nd</sup> generation of Mori clan cannot die at this place. Kobayakawa Ojou will cry"*

*“aah. Leave it to me Takeyoshi. Don’t worry Takakage. The namban just doesn’t understand the situation well. They are not our enemy”*

...

...

At the end of negotiation from Mori clan, the Portuguese ships that joined the Otomo forces suddenly withdrawn. The Otomo forces which has been caught off guard, were destroyed after receiving raid from Murakami navy led by Kobayakawa Takakage.

Kobayakawa Takakage’s resourcefulness has extended over this battle. A long time ago, Takakage has mustered up courage that is reminiscent of her twin Ane Kikkawa Motoharu. As soon as they won the battle at the sea, Takakage personally led the army at Moji castle. By reversely using a collusion scheme to manipulate the impatient Otomo side and when they are having discussion over their predicament, the Otomo army was crushed on a decisive battle at land. The very young princess general Takakage stood at the battlefield where countless bullets were flying around and fought the large Otomo army and thus making the morale of Mori Ashigaru troops goes to the top. Compared to the supreme commander of Otomo army – Yoshishige who were waiting at the back without appearing at the battlefield.

The Otomo army who cannot control their large army suffered great damage from both the land and the sea and have to give up capturing Moji castle and retreated. However, even when they are retreating, they were ambushed by Takakage’s detached troops. Be it two group, three group or even four groups, Takakage has use all that she has to predict them. If Yoshishige herself personally appeared on the battlefield, then they might be able to compete with Kobayakawa Takakage on equal term. But Yoshishige wasn’t able to appear at the battlefield no matter what. her body trembled with fear at the backside and she vomited many times.

Otomo army was annihilated.

Yoshishige wasn't able to take revenge for her Otouto – Shiootomaru. On the contrary, the Otomo clan who antagonized Mori clan were defeated and suffered a large number of casualties and were in the brink of extinction. Mori Motonari who had cornered the Otomo clan immediately turned his main force to capture Amago clan in San'in region. After Amago clan were split apart by Motonari's maneuver, they were weakened beyond recognition. Even though a sudden tragedy of the sudden death of the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation Mori Takamoto occurred, it did not have a large effect and Amago clan were destroyed by Mori clan. The veteran general Mori Motonari who lost his heir Takamoto *"my life has ended with this"* abandoned himself to grief. *"only Amago and Otomo clan. To immerse myself to defeat them before my life comes to an end. At chaotic times after this old man died, you must protect Takamoto-dono's young orphan. Please Motoharu-dono and Takakage-dono....."* his remaining fighting forces were gathered and fought intensely and decided to capture Hakata for his last work at the end of his life.

The burning ambition of the man from Hizen – Ryuzoji Takanobu *"fuhahaha! Now is the time to destroy the Otomo clan!"* have formed an alliance with Mori clan and begun to invade the Otomo clan from the west.

At Chikuzen, both clan of Tachibana clan who protected Tachibanayama castle which are close to Hakata and Takahashi clan that rule around Dazaifu suddenly betray Otomo clan and went to Mori clan.

Furthermore, the natives of Otomo clan which were destroyed because they have revolted before – the old retainers of Akizuki clan received support from Mori Motonari and have landed on Kyushu.

The Otomo clan still hasn't recovered completely after suffering a crushing defeat at the battle of Moji castle. Above all else, the important head of the clan – Otomo Yoshishige were still stricken with shock due to the previous defeat. It could be said that the queen of 6 countries were still asleep.

Meanwhile Otomo clan has been surrounded by enemies and in complete deadlock because of Mori Motonari's plot.

The Mori force which has annexed the territory of Amago clan has become more powerful and once again landed on Kyushu. They have come to make an onslaught with momentum of their anger.....their commander is Kobayakawa Takakage who were once has left the frontline due to shock from the sudden death of Takamoto but her pain has been recovered by her twin Ane and brave commander – Kikkawa Motoharu.

The great father Motonari's life are going to run out. Because of the death of his heir Takamoto, Motonari's heart is virtually dead already. The current Motonari lived only by the obsession of which he can't let himself to die without making the Mori clan condition firm and solid after he died. Hakata will belong to Mori so long as the father has his life.....

Mori Ashigaru followed the twin sisters who came back again at the battlefield while struggling to overcome the sorrow of losing their dearest Ani. All of them has turned into death soldiers. They are determined to not go back to Chugoku and live. When they die, they will die at the battlefield – the Kyushu of Shura and die for the sisters.

On the other side, Otomo Yoshishige no longer has any Otouto to protect anymore. She has neither a father nor mother. There is no confidence to win against the Mori clan. The feeling of anger of which she wanted to take revenge for Shiootomaru, a desire for vengeance has caused tragedy that resulted in large casualties among the retainers. If Xavier sees her present figure, what would she say? Kobayakawa Takakge who personally entered the castle by boat and continued fighting at the frontline and she who is frightened while being far away from the battlefield, their capacity as a commander cannot be compared at all. Kobayakawa Takakage has lost her dearest Ani - Takamoto and yet she still has her father Motonari and her Ane Kikkawa Motoharu. As for Yoshishige, she was lonely. No one is happy even if she won. It only means that her death would be postponed. Yoshishige already couldn't find any reason to fight in this battle. By all right, Otomo clan should've been left to ruin at that time.

However, that didn't happen.

.....

.....

.....

A stormy night.

The symbol of battles and veterans of Otomo clan – Hetsugi Akitsura, *“Hime-sama is a fool! Mori Motonari cannot be defeated even if I cry! the Otomo clan who had lasted for 21 generation will be ended with Hime-sama’s generation, how mortifying!”* After being stricken with grief because of Mori Motonari’s overwhelming offensive, the master – Otomo Yoshishige who seclude herself in her mansion are being forcibly pushed by him on to a palanquin. Together with his partner, the talented boy skilled in Iai slash – Yoshihiro Shigetoshi, they carry the palanquin and take Otomo Yoshishige on top of the hill of Aka-Yahata shrine.

Frankly speaking, Hetsugi Akitsura’s action is like a retainer kidnapping his master. Even if its for the sake of the continuation of anti-Mori war, if it was suspected as a rebellion then its inevitable that thing will running out of control.

However, Hetsugi Akitsura has already prepared himself for the worst. When it comes to *“Nikaikuzurenohen”*, this veteran general who is devoted in military arts *“its deplorable for the Shuras of Kyushu to neglect military affairs and being absorbed with the dispute of the lord’s heir”* weren’t concerned with the political strife. And as the result, he weren’t able to prevent *“Nikaikuzurenohen”* and deeply regretted for not being able to protect his previous master. Before this he vowed

to Usa-no-Hachiman <sup>Bodhisattva</sup> Daibosatsu to protect the young legitimate heir Shiohoshimaru – Otomo Yoshishige for life. He always put himself as the vanguard and wield his sword *“Chidori”* to cut down the enemies Shura.

At the hill of Aka Yahata, a torrential rains downpour at the sideways and lightning fell everywhere. For Otomo Yoshishige who was trembling in the palanquin, this is the very state of Sengoku era of Kyushu itself. Furthermore, even though its just a branch shrine, this Hachiman shrine is a place that is deep connection with fate and prophecy.....Yoshishige who detest Kami thought this as a disgusting place. The



angry look of her dead Chichi whom she let to die at “Nikaikuzurenohen”, the phantom that shaped as her very young Otouto – Shioichimaru who steal Yoshishige’s family inheritance and the face of the dead Shiootomaru who were defeated by Mori Motonari, those seem to surfaced from the side of the lightning. The intellectual Yoshishige doesn’t believe in the existence of world beyond the death of this life. The dead could never be resurrected and live again. There is no such thing as resurrection that the Christians preached about. There is no such thing as souls of the dead reached Nirvana. Paradise after the death is a lie. Above the ground, the real world of this chaotic era are keep spreading. Xavier will not be revived and come back.

*“enough already.....! Hetsugi. Yoshihiro. I am already unable to lead Otomo clan to fight Mori clan.....! It has been determined that it would fail in the end. I am no longer able to endure seeing both allies and enemies fighting each other and shed their blood.....!”*

Hetsugi Akitsura who is shaking his sharp pointed mustache while being wet from the rain “Hime-sama is a fool!” let out a roar like a demon.

*“the originator of Otomo clan and many other clans has been lost during “Nikaikuzurenohen”! But there is already Hime-sama who reign over Otomo clan and has the qualification of being the queen of six countries of Kyushu! Indeed, there would traitors during chaotic times! But there is also people who vowed to gratefully die for Hime-sama until the end! Stand up! Rely on our loyalties, the retainers! Believe in us! What do you need to fear?!”*

*“.....Usa Hachiman-jin.....has cursed.....me.....”*

*“what does it mean?! Certainly during Heian period, there are unexpected things like oracle! Open your eyes! At least be afraid of Mori Motonari’s resourcefulness”*

The young military commander Yoshihiro Shigetoshi has always acted the person who cleaned up the consequences of the extremely radical Hetsugi Akitsura. He is more mature than his age. for Hetsugi Akitsura, the young man has the same similarity as his own real son. Yoshihiro soothed Hetsugi Akitsura by putting on a black clothing to protect his proud beard from being wet by the rain.

*“Oyassan. Hime is scared because you shout callously. Hime is a delicate person. But if you can politely explain the reason you will calm her heart down. She is an intelligent person who can flash out a plan to break Mori Motonari’s siege. Oyassan is unable to handle a young woman huh? <sup>Good Heaven</sup> Namusanda”*

*“fool!!! Yoshihiro! Its too lukewarm! Right now Otomo clan has been surrounded by Mori forces from 4 sides! There is no time to leisurely explain any reason! The thing that determined the outcome of battle is fighting spirit! There is no reason or plan so long as Hime-sama has rallied up her fighting spirit!”*

*“even so, its counterproductive to bring out and scold Hime-sama inside Hachiman shrine where she had feared since young in the middle of thunderstorm”*

At this time, Otomo Yoshishige leaked out a word.

*“Hetsugi. Between Usa Hachiman-jin.....Hachiman Daibosatsu and me, which one do you choose?”*

Hetsugi Akitsura (although I don’t understand anything, I know that Hime-sama is suffering) has been inspired.

*Hime-sama has been scared of her family and retainers ever since “Nikaikuzurenohen”. It was natural for her to fall into misanthropy since her Ochichiue and Ogibu-jo as well as half of the whole retainers schemed to disinherit Hime-sama. And this Hetsugi Akitsura is a person who merely looking at the inheritance dispute like a spectator. There is no chance of getting full trust from Hime-sama after rushingly vowed loyalty to her after the tragedy happended.....!*

*Being betrayed by her parent, this person who has lost all of her Otouto is longed for.....an existence who will never abandon her. Those help cannot be found when she escape to Zen Buddhism or being attracted to Christianity. All of it.....Hime-sama heart were damaged, thirst and dried. A human being is necessary for her. Loyalty that is similar for being a rule, not some stubborn veteran general who kept stating empty words like loyalties. A real and living human being.*

Hetsugi Akitsura unsheathe his famous sword "Chidori". In front of the surprised Yoshishige and his partner Yoshihiro, run down the hill with full speed. He aimed at Japanese Cedar Ipponsugi which is the sacred tree of Aka Yahata shrine.

*"with my faith as a human to gods and Buddha and my loyalty to the master as a samurai. If Hime-sama want me to choose.....I will choose Hime-sama without question! O Hachiman Daibosatsu! The furious Raijin! I will become a demon to cut off the enemy! Why does this young princess without sin were cursed?! If you will deliver divine punishment, then give it to me! Even if it's a god, all sworn enemy of Hime-sama will be cut down! I will cut them down!"*

Yoshihiro ran after Hetsugi Akitsura to rescue him.

*"stop Oyassan! Don't raise a sword so high in this thunderstorm! You would get direct hit from the lightning! Namusanda!"*

Otomo Yoshishige unintentionally jump out from her palanquin and tumble down from the hill.

*".....w-wait! Hetsugi.....I am the worst. I'm sorry. I will never doubt you again. That's why, don't commit suicide.....!"*

*"don't be a fool Hime-sama! I am not committing suicide! From now on, I will show you that I will cut down Raijin and heaven if they try to attack Hime-sama! Otomo clan! If it means to protect Hime-sama, I will cut and kill the god!"*

*"no good! Hime don't approach Oyassan! Chidori has been struck by lightning! Oyassan! Wait, wait. The surface has become white! Namusanda.....!"*

An intense thunder roared to the extent that it would tear the eardrum and Otomo Yoshishige's vision become pure white.

Chidori which was hung to the sky were directly struck by the lightning.

Hetsugi Akitsura swung his "Chidori" while gushing out fresh blood from his eyeball and having half of his body burned by the electric current *"the Raijin has been cut down!!!!"* and make a majestic pose.

In the next moment, Hetsugi Akitsura fell down to the ground. He doesn't have power in one of his knee. He lost sense of half of his body which were burned from the electric current. "Chidori" which were swing and stabbed upon the ground have miraculously saved the old general's life. the electric current that went through half of Hetsugi's body flowed to the earth through "Chidori". However, he lost the freedom of half of his body for an eternity.

*".....Hetsugi.....?!"*

*"Oyassan! It's a fact that you truly are a big idiot!!"*

While Yoshihiro lend his shoulder, Hetsugi Akitsura who cannot stand up and still kept his consciousness shouted.

*"Hime-sama. Apparently my leg has become weak after angering Usa Hachman-jin. However, even so I can still fight by sitting upon a palanquin! Not yet. Half of my body still can be moved! I am still alive. Until this live has ended, until the moment that my hearts stopped beating, I will become the incarnation of Raijin and look after Hime-sama! That was the least thing I can do who couldn't stop Nikaikuzurenohen"*

Otomo Yoshishige nodded while supporting Hetsugi Akitsura's body together with Yoshihiro.

*"the one that decided the outcome of a battle is fighting spirit! Even if we fight Mori Motonari, the deceased Shiootomaru-sama will not be revived. Even so, Hime-sama must fight Mori clan! You shouldn't yield to Mori Motonari while being frightened by prophecy and oracles! Fight your fate! Use this old life and throw it away, be it as a sword or as a shield!"*

...

...

This along with the dawn that came upon Aka Yahata shrine.

Otomo Yoshishige who leave her mansion and left her retainers in confusion, come back again to the mansion and renamed herself "Otomo Sorin".

It was changed into a priest like name to stop the unrest and estrangement of retainers of anti-christians faction while at the same time to show indomitable resolve to fight a decisive battle against Mori Motonari.

Kyushu Military Branch

The Queen of six countries of Kyushu and Kyushu Tandai.....Otomo Yoshishige who was renamed Otomo Sorin are making miraculous plan to break through Mori Motonari's encirclement one after another.

In order to defend the most important base Hakata, the "Raijin" Hetsugi Akitsura were given an order to capture Tachibanayama castle at Chikuzen and at the same time Yoshihiro Shigetoshi were given an order to subjugate the Takahashi clan who shut themselves inside Iwaya castle of Dazaifu. Meanwhile, the Ryuzoji clan of Saga castle made the all of the local people of Kyushu to know that the Otomo clan were under the risk of dissolution under the supervision of its master – Otomo Sorin once again.

The balance of the offense and defense of Mori forces that surrounded the most extreme battlefield - Tachibanayama castle has become fierce.

Kobayakawa Takakage personally lead the soldiers and recaptures Tachibanayama castle and shut herself inside as soon as the Oni Hetsugi Akitsura "*die die!*" on top of a palanquin while having the retainers to carry him in their soldier rushed into the midst of battle of conquering Tachibana clan and make Tachibanayama castle fell. Kikkawa Motoharu fully prepared herself to die if necessary in order to protect her Imouto inside Tachibanayama castle if Otomo army siege of Tachibanayama castle doesn't break and decided to repeat their charges.

With their master Otomo Sorin show a firm will of repelling Mori clan from Kyushu for sure and Hetsugi Akitsura becoming the legendary Raijin and were first to go to the battlefield, the Otomo army has reborn powerfully unlike anything else.

Mori Twin River – Kikkawa Motoharu and Kobayakawa Takakage bet all of their intellect and bravery to continue fighting with Mori force who is determined to never withdraw until they achieve the last dream of their old father which is to obtain Hakata.

Both sides were holding their ground.

Formerly during the battle of Moji castle, Kobayakawa Takakage's resourcefulness has been seen through Otomo's army and had won easily one after another. But it wasn't so this time. Otomo Sorin who entrusted herself on Hetsugi Akitsura, anticipated Kobayakawa Takakage's plan while exerting her intellect and enduring the tension of battle. She immersed herself in making detailed measures at several places.

In the past battle, Kobayakawa Takakage who inherited the talent of making strategy from her father, was inexperienced to personally plunge herself to lay out strategy to forestall the enemy in succession. She knew about Otomo Sorin's true abilities when she was being serious and feared it by saying *"this battle may not be settled forever"*. *"now that I no longer have my Anie, I can't imagine the future of this country ahead of my battle"*. Kobayakawa Takakage who was originally anxious about losing the people's life on the battlefield, was holding some hesitation in the battlefield. Perhaps it was because she was under the pressure of this hard fight.

Kikkawa Motoharu *"Takakage. You think too much. Wield a spear on the battlefield and we will surpass this"* supported her Imouto's wavering heart. A direct confrontation against Otomo's clan is repeated. The Raijin Hetsugi Akitsura led suicide corps while swinging his sword "Chidori" which were changed to "Raikiri" on top of his head while being carried on top of a palanquin. Even Kikkawa Motoharu raised her hands. The old general whose half of his body was already dead because of being struck by lightning *"you can bring me to the middle of the battlefield on top of a palanquin and if you are scared then resign, scatter and escape"* opened his eyes wide and rebuked the young Shura of Kyushu – Yoshihiro Shigetoshi with a look of a demon.

As the result of Otomo Sorin's namban trade policy, the Twin River of Mori were surprised by the enormous amount of their Tanegashimas and gunpowder. Namban trade at Nishikoku – Hakata were concentrated at Nagasaki and Hirato. Such big firepower cannot be collected in the Mori clan as long as Hakata is being suppressed.

The fight between the two army which has reached from Tatara river in front of Tachibanayama castle that flowed until Tatara shore has yet to come to an end. Mori begin to gradually suffer from the maintenance of supply line. Because Otomo clan has to block anti-Otomo power at Kyushu and Ryuzoji clan at the same time, they cannot gather all of their energy for a decisive battle with Mori clan.

Both sides fell into the so called “perpetual check”. The wisdom and courage from both sides at the match were completely equal.

Now the element that will decide the outcome of the battle.....is the amount of their fighting spirit just like Hetsugi Akitsura had said.

*“I wonder if the lives of soldiers from both sides will be scattered at Tatara river more than this. But only Hakata which is Chichiue’s earnest dream must be taken. Even if I can’t picture anything that would come after that.....what should I do?”* at that time, Kobayakawa Takakage were worried.

Although Otomo Sorin were in heaps of conflict and hesitation.....she has devised a heartless plan in order to win against Mori Motonari.

*“although Ouchi clan who were in charge with Sorin’s Otouto – Shiootomaru has fall to ruin, the kinsmen of Ouchi clan – Ouchi Teruhiro has took refuge at Bungo. The family inheritance of Ouchi clan has been given to this Ouchi Teruhiro. I shall lend the Otomo navy to land at Suo to attack and occupy Yamaguchi.....at the same time, let the remnant of Amago and Yamanaka Shikanosuke rise to action in Izumo and make a sea of flames at San’in region. If we cause a rebellion on the west and east side of Mori’s homeland – Chugoku region, then Mori Twin River that stepped upon Chikuzen will be isolated and died”*

Speaking of which, Mori Motonari adopted that plan to extort the Otomo clan. Sorin was aware of what happened and conversely used it back to Mori clan.

But this is literally a plan to throw away someone to death.

Ouchi Teruhiro who knew about his social position has already given up on reviving Ouchi clan and become a Christian at Bungo. He was living a sequestered life while mourning for the people of Ouchi clan who had perished and passed away. He

doesn't have any talent for battles. After all Mori Twin River army at Chikuzen and Ryuzoji army of Saga castle, it is Sorin's objective to bring down these two. Ouchi Teruhiro and Yamanaka Shikanosuke are nothing more than a pawn to divide Mori Twin River at Chikuzen from Mori's homeland Chugoku region. Just like Shiootomaru who succeeded the family inheritance, both Ouchi Teruhiro and Yamanaka Shikanosuke would probably have their neck cut once they got defeated by Mori Motonari. And this time, from the very beginning, Sorin has no intention to send reinforcement to them. They don't have any room to do such things because Otomo clan must put all of their power for a decisive battle at Kyushu.

The ronin Yamanaka Shikanosuke who hide herself at San'in region underground “  
7 Misfortunes and 8 Pains  
*Shichinanhachiku. I was going to fight Mori clan after being invited by Otomo clan for the sake of reviving Amago clan. How is it? Please use me as a disposable piece to you hearts content!*” started a plan to revolt at once after gather the remnant of Amago clan with ringing courage. Everyone rumored that even if Sorin didn't call out for her, Yamanaka Shikanosuke would rise in revolt for the sake of Amago clan revival by all means. It was just like that. Shikanosuke's valor were said to be a match with Kikkawa Motoharu as well. Sorin thought that Shikanosuke would be able to survive even she revolted and defeated by Mori clan.

But on the other hand, Ouchi Teruhiro doesn't have valor like Shikanosuke. Furthermore, since Ouchi Teruhiro took refuge under Sorin of Bungo, it could be said that his existence is like a substitute for the dead Shiootomaru for Sorin. He entered Christianity with some degree of reverence for the religion faith. He is objected by the retainers and were baptized to make up for Sorin's favor, Ouchi clan and Shiootomaru. Furthermore, he held a memorial service in namban style for Shioichimaru and other who died at “Nikaikuzurenohen”.

*“I want you to go back to your samurai clan. To invade Suo right now and I want you to die”* Sorin was never able to say it to Ouchi Teruhiro.

But, she will lose her chance if she hesitate any further.



When he know that Sorin has begun to support Yamanaka Shikanosuke, Ouchi Teruhiro who knew about the plan that Sorin are going to use has become impatient.

*With the way things are, Sorin-sama would never summon me for eternity.*

At a night of a certain day. Ouchi Teruhiro visited Sorin.

*"Sorin-sama. I have received favors more than enough. This is the last moment whether Otomo clan would fall or not. Please give me the command to sally forth to Suo in order to save Otomo clan"*

*"if you do something like that.....you would probably follow the same fate as Shiootomaru.....are you alright with that?"*

*"the voices of people who speak ill of Sorin-sama as the Otouto killer has reached me. But that was a misunderstanding. I who had abandoned the world and keep holding a memorial at the church for Shiootomaru-sama and everyone else as well as receiving Christians baptism instead of you, I know it very well"*

*"if both the remnants of Amago and Ouchi clan rise in revolt at the same time, the Mori clan own country will be disturbed. No matter how much I think about this, there is no way to win against Mori Motonari except this. Because this is the moment whether Otomo clan would perish or not, therefore I am not able to be concerned about appearance. Because the opponent is Mori Motonari.....but"*

*"but?"*

*"but since you are not Sorin's Otouto, you might be able to survive. If you plunge an attack earlier than Mori Motonari and then Motonari's life comes to an end, the truth will come out from the lie, and then Ouchi clan.....may be revived. But Sorin shouldered the destiny of killing her Otouto. The chance for your survival would be very low....."*

*"what destiny Sorin-sama? You were always suffering from something"*

*"to relentlessly abandon all Otoutos to death in order to reign as the queen of Kyushu. That is Sorin's destiny"*

Sorin conveyed the content of Usa Hachiman-jin prophecy to Ouchi Teruhiro.

While listening to the content of the prophecy from Sorin, Ouchi Teruhiro has decided after seeing Otomo Sorin's eyes shaken little by little all the time. *"was there such a thing? has this person been tormented all the time by the words of the prophecy?"* he pitifully thought so. He noticed that if the battle against Mroi clan at Tatara river is repeated any further, her heart will not last any longer. He who keeps mourning for Shiootomaru and the other with Sorin at the church, know the frailty of Sorin's heart very well.

*"please let me tell you something Sorin-sama. You have approve my refuge to Bungo. The kindness of comfortable retirement that I received until now, I will return that favor back. I shall landed on Suo and let the remnant of Ouchi clan rise in revolt and go straight to attack Yamaguchi. There is no need for reinforcement"*

*"however, I kept you nearby to make up for Shiootomaru who has died.....after all, Sorin had make a sacrificial pawn again"*

*"no Sorin-sama. I had inherited Shiootomaru-sama's dying wish and got to Yamaguchi. But.....its fine not to take me as your Otouto. If your Otouto dies, you will suffer even more sorrow. Besides I am no more than just a general who went to exile to Otomo clan. If I don't become your Otouto, the prophecy will be invalid. If I survived from death, the Sorin-sama will be free from the prophecy of killing your Otouto"*

*"you will die! Even if you didn't become my Otouto, the chance for your survival is very low"*

*"its alright Sorin-sama. Please forget about me without regret when I didn't return from Suo. Under any circumstances, you must not thought me as among of your Otoutos. Until now I have survived since I am a coward. By all right I should've died along with Shiootomaru-sama when Ouchi clan fell.....naturally, my home is the place where I should return"*

...

...

Yamanaka Shikanosuke led the Amago 10 Heroes and revolted at Izumo while at the same time, attacking Gassantoda castle. Ouchi Teruhiro led a navy forces to go ashore Suo and aimed directly at Yamaguchi.

At this opportunity where Mori Motonari stuck at his homeland, the escape route of Mori Twin River who were isolated at Chikuzen were blocked. The Otomo clan plunge themselves by launched an all-out attack with their proudest brave generals including Hetsugi Akitsura.

It was Sorin's plan for a comeback.

However Mori Motonari's craftiness or the amount of emotion towards his family to such extent that he will use every possible callous plan to win a battle, both of them has surpassed Sorin's expectation.

Sorin were depressed when her Otouto who were send to Ouchi fell ecause of Mori clan. There is no way that Ouchi clan would use the son of a distinguished nobles as a sacrificial pawn. Soon after Mori Motonari foresee that the forces of Mori Twin River would be isolated at Kyushu and crushed by Otomo army *"damn you Sorin. I thought that you would remain like a child, but you have grown before I notice it. Or perhaps its because you are obsessed about absolutely brought down this old man who had callously kill Shiootomaru"* he was confused and giving up capturing Hakata which is his last dream throughout his life.

*"after Takamoto-dono's death, I have survived by using only willpower and passion. My life had probably come to an end here. My life is ended by being defeated by Otomo Sorin"* Motonari seems to realize. *"at the very least, its necessary to let Mori Twin River survive"* this Hakarigoto-jin – Mori Motonari decided that he will not mind even if people laughed as he was completely defeated by Otomo Sorin whose wits doesn't matched his own.

A messenger was sent to Chikuzen battlefield to order immediate withdrawal for Mori Twin River who advocated do-or-die resistance and was prepared for the last honorable death.

*“it’s a loss. Abandon all Hakata and Tachibanayama castle. Abandon Chikuzen battlefield entirely and quickly return to Suo. This battle is a complete loss for Mori clan. This old one’s wisdom was defeated by Otomo Sorin. That girl who can only being frightened by dreadfulness and terror of chaotic era has surpassed me. Kikkawa-dono, Kobayakawa-don, you must not die. Be careful of the barrages of Tanegashimas that Otomo clan take pride. Even if you are a famous brave or a resourceful general, under the bullets of Tanegashimas, you are no different than a Ashigaru. Otomo Sorin who has successively invested in namban weapons.....was not an opponent that this old man can surpass. If only Takamoto-dono is still alive, Mori clan could watched over the whole world”*

...

...

It was the moment that the fragment of the dream of Mori Motonari who grew old were scattered.

In the end the Mori army.....Mori Twin River – Kobayakawa Takakage and Kikkawa Motoharu had realized that their father Mori Motonari had gave up everything and they retired from Kyushu while shedding tears of regret. The pursuit of Otomo army was severe and it was a desperate retreat.

The dispute of Kitakyushu were concluded and Hakata belong to Otomo Sorin.

Otomo Sorin who completely defeated the invincible Mori Motonari who destroyed Amago and Ouchi clan, has become the queen of six countries of Kyushu both in name and reality.

But Sorin also received a great loss.

As expected Ouchi Teruhiro cannot make Yamaguchi surrender. He died in battle after being defeated by Mori main force which has returned from Kyushu.

As for Yamanaka Shikanosuke, she wasn’t able to capture Gassantoda castle and was defeated by Mori army without any fortunes of battles.

Although Mori Motonari paid a high price of abandoning Kyushu, Mori clan was barely saved from the brink of extinction. However, the path to Hakata has partly lost forever. When the 2<sup>nd</sup> generation – Takamoto was lost, Motonari repented that the path to Hakata should've been given up unsullied. The old general felt relieved that the Mori Twin River has come back alive from the country of Shura. Mori clan shouldn't have wished for the world.

Mori Motonari leave a will and have achieved a peaceful death while being nursed by Mori Twin River and the orphan of the legitimate child of Takamoto – the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation - Mori Terumoto.

...

...

...

Just as according to the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin, Otomo Sorin become the undisputed conqueror of Kyushu.

(Yamanaka Shikanosuke were able to miraculously escaped from the jaws of death by reciting Shichinanhachiku, but.....as expected Ouchi Teruhiro died too shortly. He wasn't my Otouto. But he followed the same fate with Shiootomaru. Although I know it, Sorin send him to the jaws of death and let him to die, right.....enough, I cannot make any excuses. Its as good as Sorin killing him)

Although she has survived with extremy glory while tasting a great sense of loss of a friend whom she considered as an Otouto, she had fortified a new order for controlling Chikuzen.

The Tachibana and Takahashi clan which supported Mori clan and rebelled has been destroyed by Otomo army at this point. A retainers who takes pride with their loyalty to never betray their master must be made to defend Chikuzen until death.

Although Mori withdraw from Kyushu, the self-proclaimed supreme ruler of Kyushu – Ryuzoji Takanobu of Saga Hizen who was still in flawless condition, took an

opportunity of expanding their power steadily while Mori clan fought desperately against Otomo clan.

Therefore, Sorin entrusted the defense of Chikuzen to the two loyal retainers who had scolded her at Aka Yahata shrine.

Tachibanayama castle were given to “Raijin” Hetsugi Akitsura and were ordered to defend Hakata. He was given to succeed the family name of Tachibana clan.

His young partner – Yoshihiro Shigetoshi were given both Iwaya and Houmanzan castle and were ordered to defend Dazaifu. He was given to inherit Takahashi clan.

*“I have been given Tachibanayama castle? I understand Hime-sama. Please be relieved, as long as I have my life, I will continue to fight. I will protect Otomo clan until I die”* Hetsugi Aktisura agreed to shoulder this heavy responsibilities. He change his name to “Tachibana Dosetsu” at that time. Sorin didn’t understand the meaning of the name “Dosetsu”.

And, Yoshihiro Shigetoshi who has been made to carry the “Raijin” on a palanquin *“I will follow Oyassan”* changed his name to “Takahashi Shoun”.

Incidentally, Tachibana Dosetsu forcibly made Takahashi Shoun’s “Daughter” – Takahashi Munetora whose fame has been rising inside Otomo clan with her capacity as a great commander of both literary and military arts, to make her as the “Husband” for Ginchiyo to inherit his family headship. At that time, she changed her name from “Munetora” to “Muneshige” and disguised herself as a man. she was renamed because they wanted her to be given one character from the lord’s name “Sorin”. The character “Shige” were the one that Dosetsu personally give to Muneshige.

Sorin also doesn’t understand Tachibana Dosetsu’s eccentricity very well. if he want to have a male to inherit his family, then he should’ve get a male as an adopted child from the beginning.....but she let Tachibana Dosetsu to do what he like. Tachibana Dosetsu is a veteran general. There would surely some deep thought he held inside. *“a marriage between women, what the heck are you saying?”*

Takahashi Shoun declined my times over but *"I understand Oyassan at all"* he reluctantly agreed.

Another thing is that Yanagawa castle located between Saga and Chikuzen is the most important base for anti-Ryuzoji war. But there is a Gishou from Yanagawa castle who serves Otomo clan – Kamachi Muneyuki. They didn't have to be worry about rebellion. However, Kawachi Muneyuki has been cordially supporting Ryuzoji Takanobu who wandered around Hizen twice even without any sense of obligation. At the same time he was the samurai who loyally serves Otomo clan, he is also a man with chivalrous spirit. If Kamachi Muneyuki didn't protect Ryuzoji Takanobu, Hizen along with many Christian daimyos including Arima and Omura would've serve Sorin as her retainers perfectly.

But because Kamachi Muneyuki is a Gishou, he would never betray Sorin. Sorin didn't pick up a foolish measure of taking away confiscate Yanagawa castle from Kamachi Muneyuki.

(the prophecy has been accomplished. Sorin stood on top of the country of Shura while stepping across the corpses of my Otoutos. The enemy of Shiootomaru and Ouchi Teruhiro – Mori Motonari are no longer alive in this world. Sorin no longer has a reason to fight.....) Sorin who fortified the ruling system of Chikuzen promptly decided to subdue Ryuzoji Takanobu of Hizen as her last battle while encouraging her heart which has begun to fall.

*"defeating Ryuzoji Takanobu. If I assume firm domination over Kitakyushu, Sorin would soon be able to finish this battles that happened every days. This time, this shall be the last war....."*

However there is a scar that Sorin must overcome at all cost.....the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin that said "Murder her own Otouto in order to become the Queen of Kyushu".

*Shioichimaru. Shiootomaru. I didn't make Ouchi Teruhiro as my Otouto in order to avoid the prophecy from being accomplished but keeping him close to me as a substitute for Shiootomaru. Up until point, the prophecy has been accomplished.*

Sorin must absolutely overcome the fate of that accursed prophecy that she kill her Otoutos and obtained glory above the earth. If it's the current her who has won a ingenuity battle against Mori Motonari, she believed that she would be able to overcome it. The Ryuzoji army possessed the extraordinary valorous "Ryuzoji Shiten'O". Otomo army has every Shuras such as Tachibana Dosetsu at their disposal. The reason that Sorin who doesn't like war are fighting against Ryuzoji Takanobu whom she didn't harbor any grudge *"I want to overcome the disgusting prophecy of killing my Otoutos that has been cursing me all this time"* its possible that it's the only thing in her thought.

Therefore, Sorin made Otomo army with the brave general long military service – Tachibana Dosetsu to completely surrounded Ryuzoji army that shut themselves inside Saga castle. She rallied her last courage to conquer her fate and put a proper ending for her last battle.....she take the nephew of the originator – Hachiro as her Otouto and named him Otomo Chikasada. She appointed him as the new supreme commander for the siege warfare.

Hachiro who descend from Otomo branch family was a cheerful and bright boy similar to Shiootomaru.

Sorin said *"you aren't in age for welcoming any battles yet"* in order to turn Hachiro away without meeting him when he abruptly intrude uninvited. But *"I have inherit Ouchi Teruhiro-don's will"* Hachiro has confessed in order to be permitted to meet her.

At the time Ouchi Teruhiro depart to Suo, he leaves a written will about the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin to Hachiro who is Sorin's nephew. When he died, he leaves the written will to the one who has the closest blood relationship with Sorin - Hachiro who is popularly similar to the late Shiootomaru to succeed his last will.

*"Sorin-sama has always shouldered the stigma as "Otouto killer" ever since "Nikaikuzurenohen"! Hachiro will clear away that stigma now! if Ryuzoji clan is destroyed, then the chance to clear away that stigma will be lost! Ouchi Teruhiro reasoned that even if Sorin-sama become the queen of six countries of Kyushu, your*



*heart will not be saved. Somebody must eliminate that prophecy. Although its presumptuous, please let this Hachiro to succeed Teruhiro-dono's duty"*

Sorin weren't able to bluntly refuse Ouchi Teruhiro and now Hachiro's will. She made up her mind to make this as her last battle.

*"this Hachiro wished to become Sorin-sama's Otouto! Until now all people who become Sorin-sama's Otouto has died but this Hachiro will not die! Please let me call you Aneue!"*

As long as one can remember, the young Hachiro has always yearned for the beautiful, delicate and now lonely Sorin who is the present head of Otomo clan. "we promise" he smiles to her.

*"he is really similar to Shiootomaru when he was young"* Sorin thought so.

*"although Shiootomaru and Ouchi Teruhiro has promised Sorin, they both has lost their life according to the prophecy. Hachiro, do you really promise me? Do you promise that you wouldn't die? Would you keep your promise to Sorin.....?"*

*"yes. This war will resulted in complete Otomo army victory. Even if I become the supreme general, I will leave all command to Tachibana Dosetsu-sama without interfering. Don't worry!"*

*"if by any chance that you would be captured in this battle, will you commit suicide like Shiootomaru?"*

*"yes, at that time I will cry and beg for my life! I will abandon the honor as a samurai only to save my life!"*

The differences in military was obvious. Ryuzoji Takanobu who has forcibly expanded his territories with brutality has been completely isolated. There is no any factor that Otomo clan would be defeated. Even if the supreme commander are only in name, with the brave general who has long military record – Tachibana Dosetsu keep surrounding Saga castle perfectly, it will falls eventually.....

It was natural.

*“Aneue! This time you don’t have to be worried! This Hachiro will decorate the great achievement of conquering Kitakyushu for Aneue! I will go now!”*

...

...

But on the evening when Sorin appointed Hachiro as the supreme commander and sent him to frontline, she noticed something.

*“tonight, before the chicken cries, you would say that you don’t know me thrice”*  
Sorin was suddenly remembered about the prophecy that Jesus has told to Peter. Ouchi Teruhiro deliberately didn’t become her Otouto in order to avoid the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin. If that is the case then Hachiro will become Sorin’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Otouto.

*Aah. Again. I have let only my Otouto to stand on the battlefield. I vaoid fighting personally and shut myself at the back.*

(with this.....it will be the same until now.....)

She felt uneasy.

When she sent out a messenger to call Hachiro back, it was too late.

Hachiro who arrived at the battlefield encampment received a surprise attack from Ryuzoji Takanobu stepsister – Nabeshima Naoshige who led a suicide squad. He was tragically captured. His head was mercilessly cut by Ryuzoji Takanobu without even being permitted to beg for his life.

Hachiro’s head were preserved with slat inside a box and were returned to Sorin.

*“I want throw the family inheritance of Otomo clan right away. I want to become a priest. I am sick of fighting in Kyushu of Sengoku era”* in front of Hachiro’s head soaked in bucket, Sorin were stricken with grief, burst into tears and keep screaming.

Otomo Sorin was over as a daimyo of Sengoku era at that time.

Her heart broke and scattered to pieces.

*“by making an alliance with Oda Nobuna, let’s make a kingdom of god. This is Xavier-sama’s dream”* if the missionary Gaspard who claimed himself as Xavier’s student didn’t come to Bungo and give Sorin a new proclamation, Sorin would’ve been become crippled.

When the forest of Hyuga start advancing to Sorin, her glory will end.....Gaspard who was told about the prophecy *“the soldier who will overthrow you will be in Hyuga, right? If you want to sally forth the soldiers to believe in Christianity at Hyuga then you must conquer Hyuga first”* told this with a smile.

He dominate Sorin’s heart which has fall into pitch black darkness by using his words and baptizes her as a Christians daimyo. He made her to make a decision to construct Mushiga – a pagan town at Hyuga which was a land where the descendant of the Sun Goddess descended upon earth.

*“Hyuga is a sacred place which are the origin of Japan! Hime-sama do you intent to split Japan into two?!”, “with the way things are, sooner or later the whole Japan will be handed out completely to the namban!”* when the old retainers of Tachibana Dosetsu of Otomo clan has begun to make a fuss, Sorin has already become a puppet of Gaspard. Usa Hachiman-jin prophecy has been 80% accomplished. Even if she became the queen of Kyushu, there was no single happiness inside Sorin’s heart.....if the future has been determined, Sorin would perish and pass away eventually. At the time, she started to advance to Hyuga, a human being such as herself who didn’t care about her Otoutos 3 times before the chicken cries, are ought to be perished. If she would perished in the end.....then it would be the best to abandon her heart and become a puppet rather than suffers and waiting for extinction.

But Sorin’s heart wasn’t satisfied. Even if she has been baptized as a Christian. Even if she hold a mass. Even if she clenched a rosary. Even if she heard the melodious voice of chorus of boys and girls. Even if she has built the town of dream.....nevertheless, it was good. Because if she has heart, she will suffer. She

wanted to be a puppet. She wanted to be a fanatic. If she behave as if she was a puppet, then sometime she would lost her hearts for real. She believed it so.

.....until she had watched the opening of Amano-Iwato.

...

...

...

The thing that Otomo Sorin truly want aren't Gods or religions. It is a connection with a living human being. A relationship of mutual trust. When she was young, she had been betrayed by her father, halfway betrayed by the retainers who supported her stepmother and their child. She fell into misanthropy. Furthermore, it could be said the factor called a curse from the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin was added to the hostile power that give rise to a revolt in Otomo clan. sorin's heart keep wandering between "reality" and "dream" and continued to be conflicted with "rationality" and "illogicality" semi-permanently. Sorin would be injured at every choices she will turn to. They weren't a place to escape. The fact that she devoted herself to Zen Buddhism and Christianity intensively was because she wanted to ask help from gods except Usa Hachiman-jin. Yet the intelligent Sorin wasn't able to be convinced of the existence called as gods at anywhere.

The fact that Sorin had lost her Otoutos was just a coincidence. The prophecy didn't determine her fate. The order are in reverse. Sorin herself are seized by fear from the curse called as prophecy. Many times, Sorin challenged that prophecy in order to defeat her future that were given by the prophecy.....and the result was ended in failure by chance. Within the Sengoku era, it wasn't a rare or unusual things for the leader of an army is being defeated and killed or commit suicide and dying. The probability of losing their live would high, much more to male generals who lost at a battle at Kyushu where there is no law about killing princess generals.

But it is a hard fact that Sorin keep making failure when she challenged the prophecy, even if its just a hindsight based opinion.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. I don’t say that you have to become Sorin’s Otouto. Because Sorin are already, given up trying to escape from the fate that killing one’s own Otoutos.....the fate of losing one’s own Otoutos. If I make you my Otouto, you will die too. It will happen soon. Sorin has already entered Hyuga and built Mushiga and tomorrow morning, I will advance to Taka castle. Sorin will perish once the forest of Hyuga start attacking. The prophecy is fulfilled. If there is no escaping from this fate anymore, then at the very least, because it is only a single night, Sorin.....wanted to have love”*

While being on top of a namban bed.....*“Oda Nobuna was saved, Sorin wasn’t saved, you aren’t going to say such things, aren’t you?”* Sorin muttered while thrusting the surface of the gun point to Yoshiharu’s chin.

*“although there are many princess generals who watched the opening of Amano-Iwato and learned a new lifestyle called love in this chaotic era.....although there are lots of girls who had a dream to end the chaotic era were born.....love and Christianity are different. If its god, he can save a human being infinitely. However Sagara Yoshiharu, in this world you can only did one person”*

*“the partner for love aren’t necessarily have to be me?”*

*“but you are. Sorin is the queen of six countries of Kyushu. I have exceedingly ascended to such far height. Therefore, I can’t fall in love with a retainer. The one who can take Sorin or the person who reign over the world, are only a foreigner who came from outside of japan of Sengoku era. But as you know, the one who reign over the world is a girl, Xavier-sama has died and you could say that Gaspard-sama keep controlling Sorin as the virgin queen of Kyushu. If I didn’t do so, I won’t be approved by the namban country.....or else Sagara Yoshiharu. Is there any man from the future who visited this war torn country other than you?”*

*“.....I had yet to meet them”*

There hasn’t been any case that Yoshiharu had meet any man from the future. as far as Yoshiharu know, only Gaspard is the person who had the ability to predict the future correctly. But Gaspard isn’t a man from the future either. He is only a schemer who predicted the future using a technique.

*"Hikaru Genji from the Tale of Genji fell in love with a large number of woman. your partner doesn't have to be Oda Nobuna. After all you have a love relationship with Kobayakawa Takakage. She is, that hateful woman who fought over Hakata against Sorin"*

*"indeed, I was seriously fell in love with Kobayakawa-san. But at that time I have lost my memories. Because I have forgotten about Nobuna, I was able to walk another life. a life which are different from the life when I served the Oda clan"*

*"what about Uesugi Kenshin? Despite being only one night, didn't spend time with her? There is a rumor that Kenshin and you kissed"*

*"that was done in order to revive her from the brink of death. To remove the curse of Bishamonten.....is to make her a human being. There is no other way"*

*"hmm. So you really are gentle to a girl, Sgara Yoshiharu. If you let Kenshin die quickly, even Oda Nobuna will not fall into these dangerous situation"*

*".....that's true. But that's my nature"*

*"I don't say that such girls doesn't know it even for once before the chicken cries. You are strong aren't you? isn't that right? Its because you have completely taken Uesugi Kenshin's heart who has continuously rejected obstinate courting from every man until now.....if that's the case then tonight, its fine even if you save Sorin at this place right? Or would you say that Sorin is an exception?"*

*"if it was possible then I wanted to do so. Sorin has already suffered enough. She wouldn't be able to live on her own anymore" but Yoshiharu shook his head and saying "impossible".*

*"Sorin. You only demand help from love without being saved by Christians faith. But things like a person fall in love with another person.....that's not the way it is.....I have never been in love seriously to going out with a girl even until I came to this period and meet Nobuna. Though I can't say it well, even if you demand help from anything, you would never be saved as of now. Even if you give yourself to any faiths or no matter what kind of dream you are looking at, you cannot run away on your own as long as you live. Even if you try a make believe imitation of a love, you will*

*feel disillusioned and say “what, is this truly love?”. Besides, you have retainers with unmatched loyalties like Tachibana Dosetsu”*

*“.....its regrettable but there is a wall that can never be crossed over between families and retainers. How much would I be saved if Sorin’s father is Dosetsu or Shoun is Sorin’s Ani. I wished that I would be born in Tachibana clan and not Otomo clan.....”*

*“whether it’s a retainers or a family, they are all the same! Why didn’t you believe in Dosetsu who swore his loyalty by jumping through the lightning?!”*

*“I am thankful for Dosetsu. But! Sorins doesn’t have any value that’s worth Dosetsu’s loyalty! Dosetsu have half of his body paralyzed for the sake of Sorin’s curse! Even if Sorin would doubt Dosetsu.....unless he choose either me or Usa Hachiman-jin.....”*

*“no, Sorin. Its different. Dosetsu didn’t regret anything. He is a loyal retainer for even offering half of his body for your sake. With the way that you hate and dislike yourself since you are cursed, be it religion or human being, none of them can save you”*

*“Oda Nobuna was able to love herself since she has forgiven her own self! But even that girl would become a weak girl that you absolutely hate if she killed her own Otouto by her own hand!”*

*“Sorin, right now you are not fighting against yourself! You must show the courage just like when you fought against Mori Motonari once again! I am not saying that you should take a spear to kill an enemy on the battlefield. I cannot save a person. The god is the same. A timid person who is conflicted with their own selves cannot save anyone! People and god can only push forward the back of the people who try to save their own self!”*

*“its not possible to fell in love with a woman who cannot respect her self-esteem! There is no worth in that!”*

Sorin wished that by continuing her unreasonable selfish behavior, Yoshiharu would vent his anger to herself.....If she isn't loved at all, then she wished to be hated so that she would be beaten.

But then right at the moment when a feeling of anger to Sorin which welled inside Yoshiharu. (Sorin has suffered for a long time more than Kenshin, Kobayakawa-san and Nobuna. When she was scolded by Dosetsu, she daringly opposed her destiny of killing her Otouto. She didn't continue escaping from the beginning. Daringly opposed and then lost.....after her limit, she was broken) when he thought about Sorin's past (Nobuna was the same at the first time I meet her. Criticizing her surrounding with abusive words and struggled so that she will be avoided) Yoshiharu noticed it. He suddenly remembered the pitiful Nobuna at those days.

However (I am unworthy to be hated by Sagara Yoshiharu) Sorin despaired.

*"even a lie is alright. Say that you will love Sorin and forget Oda Nobuna for tonight! Otherwise it's a war! didn't you really doesn't want Shimazu and Otomo army fight against each other? Well then!"*

*".....Sorin. Stop saying words that would hurt yourself in that way. No matter how much you act like a bad person, you won't be able to make me disappointed in you"*

*"it was.....the only thing you feel is pity towards Sorin!"*

No matter how much she implored him, Yoshiharu will not save her. It was too miserable and too awkward.

Sorin.....lighted the fuse of her gun.

*"even though god loves all people, he doesn't talk to me. But a living human can only love one person. Why it wasn't Sorin but Oda Nobuna? Sagara Yoshiharu, if you want to stop the battle at Taka castle then love only me! If not then die!"*

However Yoshiharu understood that Sorin will not shot himself to death. Now that he has heard half of Sorin's lifetime, he understand that Sorin would never directly kill a person. Although Otomo Sorin has unfolded so many battles, she had no experience of standing personally on the battlefield.



Can Sorin's heart which has strayed into the darkness be saved from a curse called prophecy? Despite Otomo Sorin was the one who requested people to save herself, yet in fact, she is rejecting everyone. She desired her own demise while fearing it. She hopes that the prophecy will be fulfilled. A sense of guilt of letting her Otouto to death which is hard to heal has made Sorin turn to her own ruin.

If it was Yoshiharu before he came to Sengoku era, he may not understand a girl called Sorin. He may not think that she is suffering from a mental illness. He would feel dread when murdered.

But Yoshiharu who met Nobuna and changed her destiny while becoming a man of Sengoku era and survive wars every day, seemed to have heard the voice of Sorin's heart.

Sorin who were thrown into this cruel chaotic era and losing all of her families cannot bring herself to believe in human beings or gods. She demanded all from a companion whom she believes that he will save her. But Yoshiharu already has a lover called Nobuna. Therefore, he cannot save Sorin with a brief love. There is a crucial difference with Uesugi Kenshin and Kobayakawa Takakage who has strength to endure their suffering for a long time.

But Yoshiharu who came from the future has only met Sorin today. He cannot become an Otouto whom Sorin demanded the most. Even if Yoshiharu is persuaded, assuming that if he promised to become Sorin's Otouto and became Sorin's family from now on, Sorin would never accept it. Since Sorin is bound with the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin, therefore the destiny of Yoshiharu's death will be decided due to the oath of death.

*What should I do?*

*Isn't there something that I can do?*

*But even if I kiss Sorin at this place, Sorin will not be saved.*

*Because Sorin herself doesn't want to be free from her fate.*

In fact Sorin.....seemed to expect from the beginning that she will lose her last wish after being rejected by Yoshiharu.

*"Gaspard are likely expecting you to kill me by letting the two of us inside Mushiga. If I refuse you, you will be confused and shot me. If I relented to selfishly embrace you, you will be disillusioned by the fact that nothing has changed and shot me as expected. I will die in which direction I go to. Gaspard expected it so. But in the end Gaspard, doesn't understand a human being which is you. You will not shot me to dead. Isn't the gun is empty?"*

Yoshiharu's prediction are partly missed.

*".....you are mistaken. It isn't empty. I admit that I can't shot you dead. I have decided it to do it this way if I were to be refused by you. Though I understand that I can be easily freed from pain if I do this from the beginning. Sorin doesn't have any courage to do it. But now I realize the crucial difference between Oda Nobuna and myself"*



*"damn it!!"* Yoshiharu shouted. Sorin pointed the muzzle of her gun to her temple while being pale. A Christian wouldn't commit suicide. Therefore, Yoshiharu believed that the gun wasn't loaded.

(I see. You didn't wholeheartedly converted to Christianity, Sorin?!!)

*".....Sorin?!!!"* Yoshiharu extended his hand to steal the gun from Sorin's hand. But it was too late. The trigger was pulled. The gunshot was released.

However, immediately before Sorin fires her gun, an arrow were shot from outside the slightly opened window and hit the gun's barrel.

The gun that Sorin held was slightly shook from the impact.

The bullet graze Sorin's temple and hit the ceiling.

*"despite Yoshiharu-dono has been gentle until this much, you have been selfishly despaired inside you head and decided to commit suicide on your own accord.....I will not let you!"*

From outside the mansion, the archer who quickly shot the arrow.....Tachibana Muneshige rolled into the bedroom while smashing the window glass.

It falls down on the floor, Muneshige strides Sorin's body who try to loaded a bullet to do a second shot while her temple is bleeding. And then.....

*"stop it! After all, I wasn't loved by Sagara Yoshiharu! I hate it that I don't get it! I don't want to live anymore! Don't interfere.....!"*

*"I refuse! Do you know for what reason did my Gifu-jo suffered half of his body paralyzed?! I am seriously angry for the time in my life now! I won't permit you to commit suicide and escapes from this world just as it is! I will prevent it with my full strength! Excuse me!"*

Tachibana Muneshige slap Sorin's cheek while trembling and snatch away the gun.

It wasn't an attitude towards the lord. It wasn't permitted.

The figure of the son of a noble family with unmatched loyalty, the perfect superhuman – Tachibana Muneshige seriously hitting her master. It was something that Yoshiharu couldn't imagine.

*"uuuuuh.....! Muneshige.....slapped me.....?! You abandon Sorin?"*

*"no, it different my lord. Although I am angry, I am not abandoning you, I will never abandon you"* Muneshige whispered it to Sorin' ear while holding her cheek and crying quietly.

*"this is an act which originally aren't permitted but "watch out for Shimazu assassin. Go silently opened the mansion's window and listened to those two conversation" by the order from Kuroda Kanbei-dono, I was guarding the lord's mansion without permission"*

*"I see. Through Kanbei's instruction, we were able to prevent Sorin from committing suicide, what a good luck"*

Yoshiharu unconsciously murmured, *"that is so"* Muneshige nodded.

*"but as a result, I overhead the conversation. But this was alright. I finally understand Gifu-jo's thought. It was all the thing that I should do. Let's go milord. This Tachibana Muneshige will overturn the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin"*

*".....Muneshige, what do you mean.....?!"*

*"yes. It appear that it's the reason I am born to this world. If Sagara Yoshiharu-dono didn't visit Mushiga, certainly I won't be able to obtain this opportunity tonight.....this is certainly is.....fate, that's how it is"*

While raising Sorin who covers her face and crying quietly, Muneshige told it to Yoshiharu. Her expression was.....

*"Sagara Yoshiharu-dono. I am sorry.....milord are now going to turn to attack Taka castle. Because of Kuroda Kanbei-dono's instruction, milord will stood upon the battlefield. Its not possible to shake off the nightmare of the prophecy that cursed milord without taking it out at Hyuga. It is the reason why my Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono raise me for this moment"*

It wasn't an expression of a young noble boy who is brought as a male warrior to support Otomo clan. It was an expression of a girl who is torn into faint love.

*"Tachibana.....Muneshige.....was it?"*

*"do you object to depart to the frontline in order to save your lord Oda Nobun-sama from crisis? Or else, me.....would you accept depart to the frontline in order to save milord?"*

*"if I supported Muneshige's choices, then Kanbei's plan will be broken and Nobun's fate would take a turn for the worse"* Yoshiharu couldn't help but to feel a sense of apprehension. However, it doesn't seem possible to shake Muneshige's decision. *"I will depart to the battlefield, even if am being objected"* he answered. *"I am sorry"* Muneshige nodded. However, one thing to be worried about is that Muneshige who was the owner of an expression of a samurai which are filled with vigor, was full of sorrow. But, a very gentle smile of a girl was also floated.

...

...

...

The town of Mushiga would turn into commotion for the departure at the next morning.

However, Sorin whose body is naturally weak, doesn't have any physical strength to stay up all night.

After putting Sorin to sleep.....Tachibana Muneshige looked up at the night sky while standing at the garden of Sorin's mansion.

*"Muneshige. Thank you for a while ago. This is a cooked rice with soup as a dinner. Its delicious"*

Yoshiharu who have disappeared into the kitchen, offered a strange dish to Muneshige. In the eye of the noble boy – Muneshige, it looked like a bait that Ginchiyo used for chicken. Muneshige unconsciously frowned.

*“wha-what is this?! Please don’t selfishly put soup on top of a rice! Just eat it yourself!”*

*“no. this is simple and delicious. It’s a nourishment for Ashigaru before battles”*

*“is it true?”* despite being half in doubt, Muneshige stuffed her mouth with cooked rice and soup for the first time.

*“.....gulp.....haa?! Th-this is?! I-its delicious...! Every grain of the rice are soaked with the taste of the soup and it melts away on the tongue?!”*

While standing quietly next to Muneshige, Yoshiharu looked at the starry sky of Mushiga. The air of Japan of Sengoku era is completely clear and there is nothing that blocked the brightness of the stars. The stars are innumerable. The Milky Way can also be seen.

*“I am extremely worried after hearing the story of the prophecy about Sorin. I didn’t know that the reason Tachibana Dosetsu suffered from half of his body being paralyzed was to show his loyalty to Sorin. It’s no wonder that Muneshige would get angry. But thank you very much for stopping Sorin”*

*“m-my apologies. I hit my master. Originally it’s a blunder that would result in seppuku but my lord’s generosity has pardoned it”*

*“no. at that time, Muneshige has an expression.....like a human being. I am relieved that the true Muneshige has both determination and sorrow within herself. It suddenly became an expression of a girl and I think your distance with Sorin is much closer now”*

*“my worry has just been born today”* Muneshige blurted it out. *“eh? What do you mean?”* Yoshiharu asked again. At that time Muneshige didn’t answer but she smiled gently.

*“Yoshiharu-dono, as for responding my master’s request, the request for a one night only love.....you should’ve been able to give temporary help for my master. If you master my master as a puppet, you would be able to stop the troops from being dispatched. If Gaspard can manipulate master with a dream called faith then you*

*should've been able to manipulate master with dream of love as well. my lord who is frightened from the battle at Hyuga are in fact something that that my lord wished for. So why didn't you do that? Is it because it would be a betrayal to Oda Nobuna-sama?"*

*"of course that is true. I thought that it would resulted in Sorin being even more cornered. Even though Tachibana Dosetsu cuts the Raijin for Sorin, and yet Sorin still wasn't able to be free from the prophecy. Even if we both are mutually fell in love seriously to each other tonight, but a temporary romantic play would only make Sorin feel despair. She is seized by the fact that she let her Otoutos to die without being able to protect them many times. Sorin herself cannot forgives herself for making Dosetsu suffered paralysis at half of his body. As long as she hated herself, Sorin would never be able to join hands with other"*

*".....as expected. The death of her Otouto – Shioichimaru-sama is the beginning of the wound inside of milord's heart.....the same with sense of guilt towards Gifu-jo.....is it truly impossible for milord to fall in love?"*

*"you are right. For the present Sorin, thing like love or a religion are only something like a drug to escape the reality in front of her temporarily. Love, family, lord and servant. A relationship between people is to understand and assist each other. Even if we can protect them, it doesn't mean we can save them. Its not possible for us human being to only support the back of someone who almost fall down"*

*"that's why you never said "I will save you" to milord. If you whisper it, even if you understand that you can save Oda Nobuna-sama at Honshu, you can't lie and make milord a disposable piece"*

*"if Sorin doesn't fight, if Sorin stop moved on once again, Sorin would not be saved. Be its Christianity, or Tales of Genji or Zen Buddhism. Even if she has any dream, it would be nothing more than an imitation of dream pushed to her by another person"*

*".....Yoshiharu-dono. Milord was originally an intelligent person. That person isolated herself in order to prevent the prophecy. As expected, there is no other choice other than to overturn the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin"*



*“even if they try to overturn it, there is no more Otouto left for Sorin. In the first place there is no deep meaning in that prophecy. By using enigmatic words and leave the people to interpret it themselves, it will bewilder the hearts of the people. A prophecy are like that. Sorin must understand the power and the meaning of that prophecy.....but I don’t know the principle behind it” Yoshiharu muttered.*

*“a man from the future like Yoshiharu-dono might be able to understand it. But for milord or us who live in this era, things like faiths, gods and prophecies and the Kotodama are truly a strong things. Then let’s go. For destiny at Hyuga.....if it means to free milord from the prophecy, then I will.....”*

*“Muneshige?”*

*“.....Yoshiharu-dono. How will Kanbei-dono intent to do when fighting the Shimazu army? she said that she had prepared excellent plan, medium plan and a bad plan”*

*“that’s right. The excellent plan is the measure to isolate Taka castle by be the first to suppress Neshirosaka in order to obstruct Shimazu reserve army. Iehisa is shutting herself at Taka castle. If the Shimazu 3 sisters cannot rescue Iehisa at Taka castle then it would be a defeat. Konoe-ojisan, me and Yoshihi are also Kanbei’s hostage”*

*“would the excellent plan succeeded?” Muneshige asked while stuffing her mouth with the rice and soup.*

*“that would be impossible. Even if they leave tomorrow morning and do a forced march, they will only arrive as far as the northern coast of Taka castle. Neshirosaka is at the southern coast. Shimazu army will arrive one step earlier than the enemy. Kanbei understand it. They might arrive in time if they didn’t reorganizes their army formation but in that case, many generals will ignore Kanbei and enter the fight against Shimazu army and there is a possibility that the strategy would collapse. Therefore, Kanbei spend time to reorganizes the army system in order to display the strategy to its limit”*

*“then the plan which will most likely be picked by Kanbei-dono to succeed.....will either be the medium or bad plan”*

*“the medium plan will be picked and the bad plan will be used in case the medium plan fails. Because it’s a bad plan then it would be a plan for desperate measures”*

*“what kind of plan are they? This stupid me still don’t know it. Even though I have heard it from Kanbei, she didn’t tell me the details”* Yoshiharu sighed.

*“in any case, whether its medium or bad plan, when both sides have begun their fight, the casualties will occurs to the young soldiers and Ryuzoji army will rise in revolt”*

*“that’s right. One of the reason why Sorin has a hard time fighting Mori clan is because Mori clan cooperates with Ryuzoji clan to do a pincer attack at the east and western territories of Otomo clan. if they brought a fight with Shimazu clan, it would give a chance for Ryuzoji clan to move”*

*“but, between Saga castle which are ruled by Ryuzoji clan and Buzen, is the home country of milord. They are Chikuzen and Chikugo. Giju-jo and Oyaji-dono are at Chikuzen and there is Kamachi Muneyuki-dono’s heir at Yanagawa castle of Chikugo. If its only defending then they could hold it out for a while”*

*“only for a while. But they won’t be in a long run”*

*“I also cannot predict it but as expected, the medium plan will most likely be picked. Because the point is, the bad plan is something that even I can think about, then I have a hunch about. Perhaps <sup>Strategist</sup> Gunshi-dono.....are certainly are like that. If its like that, then Yoshiharu-dono is”* Muneshige kept quiet and mutter *“the stars are beautiful”* while looking up at the night sky.

*“.....aah. Beautiful. Its true. But Muneshige, you have guessed the content of bad plan? I don’t understand it yet”*

*“hey, Yoshiharu-dono. The rice in soup is delicious but as expected a meat is necessary to fight in a battlefield. Lets take a side dish”*

*“side dish? You mean Hyuga’s local chicken? But, I feel sorry about eating them. Aree, but I think the one that Ginchiyo has is delicious”*

*“yes. Since it got angered by Ginchiyo-dono, the chicken doesn’t eat. It’s a flying bird”*

Muneshige shot an arrow to the sky while sitting next to Yoshiharu. It’s a tightly strung bow which cannot be pulled by Yoshiharu’s strength. A shot bird fall and plopped to Muneshige’s knee.

*“my apology bird-san. I will make you delicious. Namu Hachiman Daibosatsu.....well, shall we roasted it?”*

*“amazing?!! S-since its an arrow that I cannot evade, I have found out that Muneshige’s arm bow is dreadful, but.....that great muscle strength, great eyesight and great technique.....that is a divine work”*

*“please don’t be surprised too much. Although I am male warrior, since I am pretty much a girl, its embarrassing.....”* Muneshige became sullen.

*“aah. Sorry. Sorry”*

After stuffing their mouth with roasted chicken.....

*“.....Yoshiharu-dono.....are you going to complain about it?”*

Muneshige’s expression stiffened as if she was determined about something and she stared at Yoshiharu’s eyes. Little by little, her thin shoulder shakes.

*“I-I am scared of my first campaign. Even though I have trained myself to die, when it comes to it, I am scared of death at battlefield. Yoshiharu-dono, weren’t you scared of your first campaign? What were you had in mind when you were standing at the battlefield? Don’t you think that its unreasonable that you were suddenly being called to the world of Sengoku era from the future?”*

*“.....for me, when I noticed that I was thrown into the battlefield, there was no time for me to think. But an important person rescue me before my eyes and were shot by stray bullet and die.....an old person named Kinoshita Tokichirou. At first I was going to live as the old man’s substitute. But from midway, I have decided to fight and grant the dream of Nobuna by my own will”*

*"you are a strong person. Even without a swordmanship, you are a brave man. I.....admire you"*

*"I am not someone who is strong. When you look at it, its all because I have meet people who can share my will for me and Nobuna. But right now at Honshu, Nobuna is.....hardly has any remaining time left already. Tomorrow is the last chance to stop the battle at Taka castle"*

*"I want to support you too. I want to protect your life in a battlefield. No, I will protect you by all mean"*

*"iyaa. Even though I am the Dodgeball Yoshi, until now, I have been bathed in arrows many times but I barely avoided fatal injury. Aside from Muneshige's arrow, I have almost avoided them all. Its alright. But my life will be over if its targeted by Muneshige. You truly are the "Nishikoku Musou". You have trained yourself admirably. You are amazing"*

*"fufu. Thank you very much. But.....as the result that I carried out a will, even if can protect you, I might possibly obstruct your will to save Oda Nobuna-sama. Because there is always a paper thin differences at the battlefield. I pray it won't be the case, but"*

*"aah. There are things like that. That is fine. A person is not a puppet. Each person has their own will to fight"*

*".....you are....."*

*"but you know Muneshige. Even if our path would be separated, they would arrive at the same ending, that would be good. Ruely it would happen. I am a greedy person who will not be satisfied unless I obtained everything"*

*"yes!! Lets carry out our will to each other!!!"*

*"Yoshiharu-dono. When human beings has their own emotion, dreams and will.....it was when their pain started" Muneshige laughed while starred at the starry sky.*

*"soon, it will be dawn. I am sorry but I have to handcuffed you again. Please endure it until we arrive at the battlefield....."*

*“o-oh. What’s wrong Muneshige?”*

*“.....how curious. Even though I should’ve been able to draw a tightly strung bow even more than you, Yoshiharu-dono’ hand is.....is a hand of a man”*

*“Muneshige?”*

It was a sorrowful expression which seems to be broken at any time. Just like a twin sister of Sorin.

*“how strange. I have never been conscious about a man’s hand until now. do you know about Ginchiyo-dono’s training for chest problem?”*

*“a-a-areee? What on earth is that?”*

*“Gifu-jo made me as his son in law and brought me as a man of Tachibana clan. Incidentally, when a talk about Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono would train me severely as a stepbrother to milord was brought, Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono were discussing about it. As expected, can I who was born as a girl become a male warrior?”*

*“therefore, Gifu-jo set up an examination on me”* Muneshige said while blushing.

*“its embarrassing when I think about it now, but on a certain abrupt day, Gifu-jo was looking at my chest. Because back then I was still a child who neither know about a girl’s heart nor love, I don’t have such feeling of embarrassment. “what are you trying to do?” and I laughed about it”*

*“at that time, I was.....?”.....”did Muneshige still yet to feel and know anything about love? Its slightly different from the story that I hear from our first meeting”* Yoshiharu looks puzzled. But Muneshige didn’t mind about it and keep on talking while being embarrassed. She seemed to want to say that there won’t be any time for them to talk about this just the two of them anymore.

*“while calmly grabbing my chest “ooh. She didn’t blush nor had her heart throb! She has the courage to live as a boy! She has that quality! You will become the son in law of Tachibana clan!” Gifu-jo were saying that. Ginchiyo-dono called it as my training for chest problem because she remembered about the scene of that time. Indeed, Gifu-jo didn’t brought up that topic anymore.....if at that time, I am*

*conscious about a topic about a man's hand and blushed.....if my heart throb.....at that time, Gifu-jo would said later on that he will completely give up to brought me as a man"*

*If at that time, my heart was already become a maiden's heart.*

*I wouldn't become a son in law of Tachibana clan or Ginchiyo-dono's husband.*

*If its so, then tonight, I.....*

Yoshiharu noticed that Muneshige's eyes have become teary.

*".....the fate.....where and how would it be diverged Yoshiharu-dono?"*

*"I don't know. But its possible to fight against fate until the last minute"* Yoshiharu answered.

*"in reality Muneshige didn't want to become a man"* he thought so.

Perhaps, at that time she has calmly accepted her fate. Something must have changed Muneshige. Something would change while hearing about Sorin's past. Or did Ysohaur's conversation with Sorin have changed Muneshige? But where would it be? At that time, Yoshiharu didn't know about it yet.

*".....soon it will be morning. Yoshiharu-dono. Right now, would I remain calm about a man's hand? I-I am.....I want to verify it by all means"*

*"well. there are no other man around us in here.....w-would it be my hand?"*

*"e-excuse me! Though I will handcuffed it, but I would like to borrow it for a while!"*

While covering her deep blushing face, Muneshige pushed Yoshiharu's hand to her chest.

And she muttered.

*"Yoshiharu-dono.....my heart.....seem to explode.....the beating of my heart doesn't stop"*

While spilling large drops of tears like rain.

That Muneshige cried despite laughing.

*“ah ha ha. I am sorry. It’s a sudden strange behavior. My first campaign is approaching and I am tense. I am really sorry”*

*“Muneshige? What on earth is happening? Please talk if you have something you hide from me. Is it the content of the bad plan? Or is it something else?”*

Right next to these two.....a chicken cries.

The morning sun has begun to rise.

*“.....its regrettable but time is up. Furthermore, if I tell you, you will certainly block my path”*

*“Muneshige?”*

*“something unusual is happening to Muneshige”* Yoshiharu’s eyes is worried about Muneshige and he brought his face near. A chicken’s beak suddenly stabbed.

Furthermore, a little girl’s head-butt aimed at his abdomen.

*“koraa! You took the chastity of Ginchiyo’s husband’s breast!! Furthermore, you brought your face closer, you want to kiss?! Sagara Yoshiharu is an adulterer!”*

*“koke~!”*

*“giyaa!! This guys is attacking, I’m sorry!!! It huuuurts!!!”*

*“aah, Ginchiyo-dono?! I-its wrong, this is different! It was just a training for chest problem! Because I am afraid of my first campaign, Yoshiharu-dono try motivate me.....!”*

*“Muneshige is an idiot! He is a cheater! Isn’t there any shame about a man stealing another person’s husband? Koraa!! Sagara Yoshiharu, you might as well steal another person’s wife!”*

*“who would steal a person’s lover who is like a child like you?! I may be a head of a lolicon kindergarten but I don’t have the soul of a lolicon! I am a person from plane of breast!”*

*“w-w-w-what is a person from the plane of breast??? Hiii! P-please don’t touch me anymore! I-its embarrassing!”* Muneshige reflectively defend her chest. *“geeh!! I carelessly slip my mouth after a long time!”* Yoshiharu screamed. *“more incoming!!!!”* and Ginchiyo was increasingly rampaging and bumped her head at Yoshiharu’s jaw.

And thus, the heartfelt moment between these two, Yoshiharu and Muneshige has ended. All before Yoshiharu notices Muneshige’s determination and destiny.....

However, even if Yoshiharu notices it at Mushiga, the ending would still be the same. Because it might not be possible to change Muneshige’s determination.

.....

.....

.....

*“the first meeting between Sagara army vice general and strategist come with sudden discord. Kuroda Kanbei, why did you allow Yoshiharu stay with Sorin just the two of them? If Yoshiharu change Sorin’s mind and evade the confrontation with Shimazu clan, your ambition will be in vain. As for that woman, since Gaspard is absent, her mind is more unstable. If the current Sorin is pushed down and whispered with loving words, she will become obedient to Yoshiharu tonight”*

Sagara Yoshihi who were confined inside a jail is appealing to Kuroda Kanbei who monitor her through the prison lattice.

*“fufufu. Sagara Yoshiharu doesn’t have that kind of courage. It would be betraying Oda Nobuna. Rather, Sagara Yoshihi, you are a dangerous person. If I let you talk with Sorin for a long time, there is a risk that Sorin would change her mind.....a sister who keep on protecting her sole Imouto and a sister who cannot save any of her Otoutos. Everyone understand which one is the most persuasive. Thus I decided*



*to separate you from Sorin and watch you all night. As long Sorin is distracted by Sagara Yoshiharu, she won't try to call you"*

Kanbei who sat down in a namban chair is watching Sagara Yoshihi all night while putting a note in small Taka castle map.

They both are intelligent people. Time had passed relentlessly while these are exchanging words to probe each other's intention.

*"Kuroda Kanbei. Not long ago, a gunshot was heard, is things alright? Could Yoshiharu possibly be shot? If that the case then I wouldn't never forgive you!!"*

*"hmph. There is no problem. You and Sagara Yoshiharu are a valuable hostages to negotiate against Shimazu clan. especially, Sagara Yoshiharu. Simon has bet her life as a strategist for this strategy"*

*"if you have no plan to release me then tell me everything about your preparation which is the excellent, medium and bad plan. I understand the excellent plan. What is the medium and bad plan? A spy wouldn't be able to sneak in to this jail. Just tell it to me"*

*"I won't tell it nor leak it"* Kanbei asserted.

*"be quiet Kanbei! Tell it! Are you clear? I will absolutely never let you obstruct Yoshiharu's will! Even you are a friend who work together with Yoshiharu through life and death, I will never forgive you if you hurt Yoshiharu for whatever reason there would be"*

*".....Sagara Yoshihi. If it's the former Simon, I would let my mouth slipped and eventually make a mistake. However, this time is different. Simon had betrayed all of her friends for the sake of ambition of Kurokan Ichiryuu. I don't bring my personal feeling into this"*

*"if that is the case, then do you intent to stop me close to your hand to keep me away from Yoshiharu in the battlefield?! Then you should just do it. No matter how much handcuff you put into me, I will keep shouting as many as I want! My specialty is provocation. Even if you pulled my tongue, I will keep on shouting! You will have*

*some guilt in your conscience too! I will keep on stimulating your conscience persistently!"*

*".....hmp. You intent to dampen Simon's concentration and stifle the command? That is very impossible. At dawn when we arrive at Taka castle, I will hand you over to Tachibana Muneshige to put you at the rear camp where Sorin lead. Yoshiharu will be put at the rear camp too. If I let Sagara siblings to the frontline carelessly, you would escaped and then pursued and recaptured by Shimazu army. after the battle begun, you should talk to Yoshiharu as much as you want. You are both hostages. If you plotting an escape, I will kill you"*

*"YOU!!! why do you betray Yoshiharu? I absolutely don't understand! Tell me!!"*

*"although you came out lively from Hitoyoshi castle when you became a vice general of Sagara corps, you unexpectedly become emotional Sagara Yoshihi. i had been warned that you are a resourceful person who is comparable to this Simon, perhaps I overestimate you? as expected, you are only Sagara Yoshiharu's ancestor. hmp"*

(its dawn. Time is up. Yoshiharu.....even though I was finally able to leave Hitoyoshi castle.....even so, I still cannot do anything for the sake of my Otouto.....) Yoshihi gnashed her teeth. She was looking over Kanbei's back who is leaving. That back seemed to be slightly lonely.

(Kuroda Kanbei. Gaspard. Nabeshima Naoshige's Hagakure-Shinobi squad. Something is moving behind this battle between Otomo and Shimazu army. another war that could be called as the war of information. But I cannot solve these mysteries while being arrested. Any people by themselves alone cannot do anything at all..... any kind of resourcefulness will not be useful in the condition where it didn't reconsidered by anyone)

Kuroda Kanbei were once had an experience of being shut in a dungeon at Harima. That experience let Kanbei to rapidly grow as a strategist.

*As for me who has just leave Hitoyoshi castle with these loneliness and fear as my sustenance, can I grow up as a vice general who can support Yoshiharu? Is it possible for me to protect Yoshiharu who were driven to a corner?*

...

...

Dawn has come upon the night.

The Otomo army has begun their march towards Taka castle.

...

...

...

## **Chapter 4 - The Battle of Taka Castle**

Taka castle, the ground of Otomo – Shimazu decisive battle.

This castle is an impregnable fortress located at the hill between Tanisetogawa at northern side and Takigawa at southern side. Furthermore, their western side is a mountainous region. To make Taka castle fall through force, one would have no choice but to attack through the dry riverbed between the two rivers.

In order for Otomo army which advanced from the north to surround Taka castle, they must build a camp at the northern coast of Tanisetogawa first. Next they need to set up a camp at the plateau – Neshirosaka that crossed between Tanisetogawa and Takigawa and spread out to the southern coast. Although, the provision for each formation will be undermanned if many soldiers are being divided into the north and the south, only after controlling both the northern and southern coast that its possible to completely surround Taka castle.

Of course, Neshirosaka are located at the southern side of Taka castle which are close from Shimazu side that own Satsuma and Osumi.

For Kuroda Kanbei who commanded Otomo main army of 50000 strong to hurriedly cross the Mimigawa, whether she can take Neshirosaka earlier would greatly influence the status of the war.

On that day.

Shimazu Iehisa looked at the large Otomo army that advanced from the north while climbing the turret and stuffing her mouth with akumaki. Its already a well-known fact that Sagara Yoshiharu and Sagara Yoshihi who enter Mushiga as well as with Konoe Sakihisa – the three people has been captured by Kuroda Kanbei as hostages. In order to rescue Yoshiharu.....Shimazu army must beat Kanbei from Otomo army.

*“that is, the banner of “Lily Cross”! Otomo army has begun to attack! Its finally a war!”*

The second in command Yamada Arinobu who commanded the 3000 soldiers along with Iehisa *“men, take up your position!”* while readying his own Tanegashima.

He roared. The reason why the previous 1500 soldiers at the time Iehisa arrived to Taka castle has doubled up to 3000, was because volunteers keep rushing from the border one after another to protect the youngest child of Shimazu clan – Iehisa who has marched to the frontline of Taka castle. Everyone came with determination to die a noble death and fight for Iehisa. They are all strong men.

*“the three Ane of Shimazu will certainly come to attack Otomo army from behind. Until that point, we will protect Taka castle. Only Hime-sama that we wouldn’t let to die in battle”*

*“nyaa. Yamada had just got a wife and a baby. You aren’t supposed to die”*

*“no. it’s the opposite. My heir has been born. Even if I die here, there is only regret that remain.....as for Hime-sama, even if we will be completely surrounded by*

*Otomo army, you mustn't offer seppuku in exchange for the life of the castle soldiers"*

*".....what the. I just got found out"*

*"never, don't ever do that. Sagara Yoshiharu would never wanted that"*

*"Ou. We will never let Taka castle falls until we see the image of Iehisa-sama marrying!"* all soldiers that confine themselves at Taka castle simultaneously roared.

Iehisa looked to the north with a telescope and confirmed the intention of the swarming enemy forces.

The pace of Otomo army didn't fall into disorder.

On the contrary, it was a perfectly controlled.

It wasn't possible to expect a confusion of the chain of command just like at that time of battle of Imayama.

*"the vanguard is approaching from three sides at the northern side of Tanisetogawa. Each one of them lead soldiers of approximately 10000 strong. The combined strength of this vanguard is 30000 strong. Kuroda Kanbei who were given Buzen Nakatsu 12000 Koku has become the strategist of Otomo army. She show herself at a pedestal upon a strange 4 wheeled vehicle and brought a prisoner with a strange iron mask....."*

*"perhaps, its Konoe Sakihisa-sama?"*

The place where Iehisa confirmed the emblem, the one who led the central force is the strategist Kuroda Kanbei along with the old Tsunokuma Sekiso who is the previous strategist of Otomo clan before Gaspard came.

The commander of the eastern unit is the princess general – Yoshihiro Shigenobu on behalf of Otomo army. She should've been placed in the bodyguards unit as usual but could she be chosen by Kanbei?

The commander of the western unit is the chivalrous commander – Kamachi Muneyuki who had rushed over from Yanagawa castle of Chikuzen.

*“the formation is different! Since the whole crusade for the war is made up from Christians, I have heard they were having a breakdown.....but the morale is high!”*

*“without any efficiency, the formation will never have a chance. I heard that when the Otomo army assembled in a large forces, their command will be in disorder as always. Could it be Kanbei-don’s doing?”*

*“nyaa. In addition, Kuroda Kanbei immediately command 2 of the 3 vanguard to cross over to capture the southern coast of Neshirosaka”*

*“if we are looking at them without doing anything, we would be perfectly surrounded from the northern and southern coast”*

*“it looks like it. Even if Shimazu main force which numbered a little less than 40000 come to the reserve army, it would still be difficult to rescue Taka castle. If that happen then I shall commit seppuku. If I am captured alive, I would embarrass my Anesha. If I concede to Otomo army, Shimazu clan will fall in return”*

*“it won’t happen until that extend! I would gather a suicide squad in order to raid the place where Kanbei-don will perform her river crossing tactic!”*

*“nyaa. Thank you Yamada. But that is too harsh”*

Iehisa shook her head in disapproval. Its because at the rear of the Otomo 30000 vanguard army, there is 20000 personal guard unit that Otomo Sorin led marched slowly. There is a banner of human faced pumpkin. In the middle of the bodyguard unit there is girl soldiers who has the dream to build the country of god at Hyuga with Sorin. Every one of them is a princess general who born in the Shura clan of Kyushu. They aren’t an amateur of battle.

*“how? Sorin come directly to the battlefield from Mushiga?”*

*“it doesn’t seem that the bodyguards are too distant, perhaps Sagara Yoshihi are being detained inside the 20000 troops that Otomo Sorin led”*

*“did Sagara Yoshiharu-don fail in negotiating with Otomo Sorin?”*

*“nyaa”*

*“what sort of detail in Yoshiharu’s failure on negotiating with Sorin?”* Iehisa doesn’t understand it. Its possible to imagine that Sorin demanded salvation in the form of love from Yoshiharu. Iehisa aren’t a child who is in love with an idea of falling in love anymore. Just a while ago, she was similar to Sorin as well. She yearned for something called love. She was in love with the idea of falling in love. Therefore, she was able to understand what Sorin had requested from Yoshiharu.

*“Otomo Sorin must’ve wanted to fall in love with Sagara. If she abandon her dream to fight for the crusade as a Christian then she cannot resist being rescued by love just like Oda Nobuna at the time of the opening of Amano-Iwato. Despite this, Sorin would certainly persuade him. Although Sagara is fond of women and breast, he is faithful when it came to the most important times”*

*“it would be a bigotry if one doesn’t lay his hand when a girl showed him an interest”*

*“but that is fine Yamada”*

*“I understand”*

The discord between the retainer groups of Otomo clan was caused by the opposition between the pro Christian and anti-Christian faction. But it is said that it was the missionary - Gaspard who led a detached force to the mountain of Takachiho that is the ringleader who disrupted the retainer groups. The mountain between Takachiho and Taka castle is a severe penance for the army. its possible to say that its impossible for a namban commander who isn’t familiar with the land. Presently there is no sign of the detached force has arrive at the battlefield of Taka castle. But rather, Gaspard withdraw himself from the battlefield and entrusted the role of strategist of the battle to Kuroda Kanbei. With that its impossible to expect the Otomo army to self-destruct anymore.

*“Hime-sama. Even so, Otomo Sorin herself marched to Taka castle to attack the enemy from behind”*

*“this is outside my expectation. I expected Sorin to stayed at the back at Mushiga as usual”*

*“that being the case, the amount of Otomo soldiers that princess led is as much as 20000 strong”*

*“Otomo Sorin who dislikes battles leaves Mushiga and personally come to the battlefield? Did Kuroda Kanbei persuade Sorin? Did she hurt her feeling?”*

*“with this, the siege will be extremely harsh”*

*“it’s a defeat if Neshirosaka got taken. The same thing goes if Hime-sama had her stomach cut. As expected, I have to led 500 suicide squad to earn time and prevent Otomo army to cross the river until the troop who will attack the enemy from behind arrived. Restraint is unnecessary. My apology for this”* Yamada Arinobu stood up.

*“nyaa. I cannot order only Yamada and the other young soldier to die. Same thing with seppuku and death at the battlefield. I will go”* lehisa lifted her eyes. lehisa didn’t get excited in the front of this death and she didn’t being flustered or pessimistic. *“when lehisa-sama has decided to discard her life for battle, she truly resembles her older sister Yoshihiro-sama”* Yamada Arinobu thought. Even if she has different mother, she is still the Imouto of Shimazu clan.

...

...

*“I have trouble when Mimigawa’s tide is rising but I just barely make it in time. Now the excellent plan of capturing Neshirosaka earlier and surround Taka castle from north and south has been accomplished. With this, Shimazu army cannot rescue lehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle. lehisa is my 4<sup>th</sup> hostage! I beat Shimazu clan without fighting! Kurokan Ichiryuu!”*

Each of 10000 troops of the 30000 vanguard were chosen by Kanbei to 3 commanders. Their marching speed and morale has exceeded Kanbei’s expectation.



*“mufu! Geographical advantages, tactics and opportunity from the heaven are important but the biggest factor that decide the outcome of a battle is the choice of the personnel! The one who fight the war aren’t Buddha or god! It’s the human being! If one make a mistake at choosing the personnel, they would lose even if they have geographical advantage. If I have no mistake in selecting the personnel then its possible to turn over the disadvantages of the battle situation. It means that I have partly decided the outcome before having to fight.....even if they are the most harmonious of Kyushu, even if the enemy is the Shimazu 4 sisters who take pride with their rock solid unity, Simon will win this battle!”*

Kuroda Kanbei who sat down upon a 4 wheeled vehicle exclusive for the strategist while turning over the flag of Kurokan Ichiryuu and leading the 30000 vanguard troops *“don’t take any notice even if a suicide squad come from Taka castle. Just disregard it. As long as Neshirosaka is captured, it will be Otomo army victory. Kamachi unit! Yoshihiro unit! Cross the river and occupy Neshirosaka immediately!”* shake her fan and then.....

...

...

In the southern coast of Takigawa, a banner of circled cross fluttered and a battle cry happened simultaneously.

...

...

*“the rear guard has arrived just in time by a hair’s breadth Anesha! The whole Shimazu army has to spread out to Neshirosaka! We must not let Otomo army to cross the river! I will defend Neshirosaka until death and liberate Iehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle!”*

An explanation is unnecessary.....the most legendary brave warrior that Sengoku era has ever produced. The Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro whom is Shimazu clan are proud of.

*“fufu. I have steal lehisa’s once in a lifetime spotlight, hooray. Leave now. Serve you right. There is no Imouto who died and leave her name in history earlier than her Ane!”*

*“Kuroda Kanbei are certainly aiming for Neshirosaka by having a forced march by gambling everything which ignore the provision and the soldiers physical strength. Shimazu clan must turn towards Neshirosaka in a race against time too” the strategist commandeer – Shimazu Toshihisa keep on insisting and encouraging Yoshihisa.*

*“oh oh. There is no time to take a fortune slip to predict whether Sagara Yoshiharu has make Otomo Sorin compliant by stealing her chastity and push her down. But but, thanks to that we have succeeded in sending rear guard to lehisa-chan!”*

*“I absolutely think that Sagara Yoshiharu pushed down Otomo Sorin since he is attracted by her big breast so I took a relaxing mood leisurely. I am disappointed that Sagara Yoshiharu is not an evil person unlike his master Oda Nobuna” the supreme commander – Shimazu Yoshihisa pouted her lips.*

*“that’s why, didn’t we say this before Anesha? Sagara Yoshiharu is a worthy man who doesn’t deceive princess generals by using sexual charms!”*

*“eeh. But aren’t Yoshihiro-chan and lehisa-chan has been tempted by Sagara Yoshiharu? There is no big deal now that Otomo Sorin has been included in the fresh lover frame”*

*“Anesha! I-I am not being tempted by Sagara Yoshiharu! I only respect the man called S-Sagara Yoshiharu as a w-warrior! S-since lehisa is still a child, she may have been tempted.....I have to quickly awake lehisa. \*huff \*huff”*

*“my Nee-sans. I would say that he will fail from the very beginning. He would certainly be disliked since he would droll in front of Otomo Sorin’s big breast that looks like a pumpkin! Therefore Sagara Yoshiharu is untrustworthy! The one who can protect lehisa’s life is us the Shimazu sisters and the men of Satsuma Hayato!”*

*“maa. We have just barely rescue Taka castle but it was a small bless that lehisa didn’t come to Mushiga as a messenger to Otomo army”*

*“oh well, Yoshihisa-Neesan. Even if Otomo Sorin struggled to have Sagara Yoshiharu and didn’t consider lehisa as a danger, in that case the black hearted Kuroda Kanbei would immediately arrest lehisa for the sake of winning the battle. Even if lehisa could fight against around 100 people, she would be captured if she is being surrounded by even more people than that”*

*“come to think of it. Konoe-sama who seemed to have been planning for reconciliation by persuading princess generals such as Sorin with love has been tragically captured by Kuroda Kanbei.....I wonder if he is safe. It would be a heartless strategist to take Konoe-sama as a hostage”*

*“aah. That reminds me. A letter came from Kurokan-san saying “if you want Konoe Sakihisa to be returned, then accept my demand” but of course I ignore it Yoshihiro-chan♪ even though Kurokan-san is young, she is a thorough evil person, right? I want to be her apprentice”*

*“mattaku. Konoe-sama is the main reinforcement to Shimazu clan. You didn’t make any single effort to save Konoe-sama, Anesha.....?”*

*“now its too late Yoshihiro-Neesan. Because both sides are going clash soon. Yoshihisa-Neesan lay the main camp to the west of Neshirosaka. Yoshihiro-Neesan in the center. I set up a camp at the east”*

*“understood Toshihisa-chan. When facing lehisa-chan who is in danger, Toshihisa-chan who always spouting verbal abuse got really impatient, right?”*

*“don’t make fun of me!”*

*“hai hai”*

*“I understand your feeling but don’t get impatient Toshihisa. You mustn’t get too eager rashly”*

Kanbei’s excellent plan is slightly didn’t get accomplished.

It was Shimazu forces who captured the southern coast of Neshirosaka earlier.

When the supreme commander Shimazu Yoshihisa is at war, she is mostly indecisive. She is a princess general with carefree personality that would always draw a fortune slips whenever she is hesitating but because her Imouto lehisu stayed at Taka castle as a decoy to lure Otomo army, this time there isn't any speck of hesitation within her. On the contrary, Yoshihisa herself unusually marched to the battlefield with armed forces.

North Kyushu  
South Kyushu  
Otomo Sorin and Shimazu Yoshihisa. The fellow conquerors of Kita-Kyushu and Minami-Kyushu respectively. They have gathered in this battlefield of Taka castle.....

Yoshihisa takes Shimazu main army which numbered a little less than 40000 including Yoshihiro and Toshihisa to spread the army along Takigawa and quickly recaptures Neshirosaka.

In the northern coast, Kuroda Kanbei led 30000 Otomo army.

In the southern coast, there is 40000 Shimazu army at Neshirosaka.

Both army will cross over the river that flowed through the north and the south of Taka castle and faced each other.....

The 20000 bodyguard unit that Otomo Sorin led has taken up a position at Sou camp which is established on the hill at the north side to overlook the view when the two army confront each other.

...

...

*"ugigi! Just a little bit more and I could've taken Neshirosaka first! Shimazu clan seem to have a person with considerable wisdom! Its probably that person who has flat chest, flat butt and low happiness Toshihisa! however--! Kurokan Ichiryuu aren't just for show! I have arranged what I will do in case that Neshirosaka is captured! Tsunokuma Sekisou, now it's the time to use the new namban weapon "*

Breech-Loading Swivel Gun      Destroyer Of Country  
*Frank Okami-ki-ho" also known as "Kunikuzushi"! install it on the hill to destroy*

*Taka castle rampart! Even if Shimazu army has capture Neshirosaka, I will them realize that its already impossible for Shimazu lehisa to escape from Taka castle!"*

*"I understand your feeling. Leave it to me. But the distance to Taka castle is 5 Gochou (500 meters). The range of Kunikuzushi is approximately 3 Gochou. It won't reach"*

*"no problem. Simon has incorporated the technology of the domestically produced cannon that once loaded on Kuki navy Tekkosen. Their range is extended to 5 Gochou. It could barely reach Taka castle. Fufufu"*

*"this is disloyalty! Release Maro de-ojaru! Seppuku de-ojaru!"* Kanbei is yelling *"shut up!"* in the strategist exclusive 4 wheeled vehicle while kicking the prisoner Konoe Sakihisa who keep appealing while being dressed in iron mask.

...

...

*".....somehow I feel discomfort, I wonder why. For the sake of capturing Neshirosaka, the enemies rush in light armor and ignored their provision. They don't assume drawn out war. Once the Otomo army got into a stalemate, they would have shortage of provision eventually and self-destruct. But, lehisa and the others at Taka castle would have their water supply cut off and starve by hunger and thirst. Furthermore, the enemy has brought over the Kunikuzushi.....the match is light up today! I-its not particularly because Sagara Yoshiharu doesn't wish for a stalemate to happen! I-its not because Sagara Yoshiharu's will is worth worrying about!"*

At the southern coast of Neshirosaka. Shimazu Toshihisa was thinking about how to bring her dear Imouto – lehisa's sure kill tactic Tsuru no Buse in play. After all in order to conclude the war in one day, they can only use Tsuru no Buse. it isn't possible to talk directly with lehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle but If Toshihisa and her other 3 Ane move, lehisa would certainly respond with the three sisters with perfect timing as well. The Shimazu 4 sisters doesn't need conversation in the battlefield. They are 4 people in one.

*“we must lure Otomo army somehow. A decoy soldiers to cross over Takigawa and rush to the frontline of Taka castle is necessary. A death army should take flight and lead Otomo army to Kawahara sandback and die a honorable death! When the 3 vanguard of Otomo army keep getting win one after another and cross Takigawa, Otomo army that cross the river will be attacked in pincer movement from Yoshihisa-Neesan and Yoshihiro-Neesan who waiting at Neshirosaka along with Iehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle. But the commander who lead the decoy will certainly.....be dead”*

Toshihisa wanted to curse Yoshiharu who couldn't stop Sorin.

*What are you saying Sagara Yoshiharu. You said that you will change my Imouto's fate. But rather Kuroda Kanbei, in other words, the invasion of Kyushu by the warriors of Kyoto has been hastened compared to the original history! Shimazu army being defeated by Kuroda Kanbei, in other word Shimazu clan submit to Oda Nobuna central political power and their dream conquering Kyushu will collapse.*

*Then, Iehisa's fate will be.....*

*Sagara Yoshiharu had said.*

The youngest sister – Iehisa who always keep standing as the vanguard on the battlefield had her life run out the first among Shimazu 4 sisters.

When the central government intervened in the battle of Kyushu and the Shimazu's dream of conquering Kyushu ended. She will die abruptly.

But Shimazu 4 sisters.....correctly speaking, when Toshihisa and Iehisa were reconciled by Sagara Yoshiharu's effort, they should've been able to evade the fate of Iehisa's death. Toshihisa believe in that until she arrive at Taka castle.

However, the strategist of Oda administration – Kuroda Kanbei who originally should've not participated in this battle has been leading Otomo army. Furthermore, now she knew that the Shura personnel who commanded each unit of Otomo army has been changed and its overturn Toshihisa's expectation. *“aah. Still. It still hasn't come. That time of that “moment” still hasn't come”* Toshihisa noticed.

For Shimazu clan, this Taka castle of Hyuga is an absolute important key that serves as a gate to go out to Kitakyushu. It is also a substantial last defense against enemy army that are approaching from Kitakyushu. Toshihisa know everything.

Shimazu army must win the battle of Taka castle in order to become the conqueror of Kyushu.

In addition, this Taka castle is also the very place where their dream of becoming the conqueror of Kyushu are destined to be scattered after being defeated by the army of the person who reign over the whole world from Honshu.

The wise person Toshihisa painfully understand it.

When both army didn't reach their conclusion, lehisa surrendered Taka castle and committed suicide as the condition of forming reconciliation as her resolution. Hence, is the reason why she daringly stayed at Taka castle.

*".....lehisa.....lehisa.....you are still young. Still but a child"*

*Sagara Yoshiharu has did all sort of thing he can to the limit for the sake of Shimazu 4 sisters. He bet his own life. And yet, lehisa's fate still hasn't changed. On the contrary, her time of death has been hastened. Is it the backlash of Sagara Yoshiharu's effort to change lehisa's fate? Will the history be balanced again?*

*".....no. the man from the future is neither a prophet nor a god. Sagara Yoshiharu is the same as us, he is a single human boy. Besides, he is a person who earnestly bet his life for Shimazu 4 sister which he was originally unrelated to. He shouldn't be burdened by the fate of Shimazu clan by himself alone. Its not possible to change the fate of a person if the person himself doesn't personally fight against their fate. And now, the only one among Shimazu 4 sisters who know about lehisa's fate.....the Ane who know the future that lehisa will die and the dream of Shimazu will be scattered at this Taka castle.....are only me"*

*"right now I cannot make Yoshihisa-Neesan and Yoshihiro-Neesan to disperse. I don't have any military prestige like my Yoshihiro-Neesan but I am suitable to be the decoy. I shall change lehisa's fate, I will fight"* Toshihisa decided.

*"Tsuru no Buse tactic are invoked! I will lead the decoy unit. Make haste to cross Takigawa!"*

Toshihisa kicked her horse stomach.

Either one of Shimazu 4 sisters must become the decoy unit. A person like Kuroda Kanbei will not be taken by Tsuru no Buse that easily. If the Otomo army aren't seriously attacking the decoy unit, Toshihisa will cross Tanisetogawa without any change and intended to cut deep into Otomo's camp. The decoy unit of Tsuru no Buse doesn't have any diversion element. It's a mission that literally fighting with one's back to the wall in the midst of the enemy in order to die a honorable death. The retreat of the decoy unit is not a performance to induce the enemy. It is nothing more than an inevitable result of being destroyed after fighting with all of their strength.

*"is it alright to charge ahead without Yoshihisa-sama and Yoshihiro-sama permission?!"*

An aide involuntarily asked but Toshihisa.

*"two Ane must survive for the sake of the continuation of Shimazu clan. all young soldier. Men of Hayato. For the sake of lehisa.....for me, all of your life.....but those who wanted to stay behind then stay. I am currently blinded by my affection to lehisa. You don't need to struggle for my selfishness"*

Shake off and run down from the hill. As for the aide.

*"yare yare. All princess of Shimazu clan are lively"*

Give out a courageous shout and followed Toshihisa while scratching his head.

And the young soldiers also follow Toshihisa.

*"Toshihisa-sama! There is no holding back! Don't need to be like a bad person anymore, yeah!"*

*"so come now all of you! Prepared to die at the time you leave Satsuma! Be aware of that!"*



*“we all understand the feeling of the Ane who wanted to save her Imouto. There is no more hesitation!”*

*“thank you! everyone!”*

The man of Satsuma Hayato who served Toshihisa, followed her while letting a cry like a monkey all at once without any of them hesitating.

...

...

8000 Shimazu Toshihisa force run down to Neshirosaka and take the opportunity to approach Takigawa.

Otomo Sorin who placed Sou camp on top of the northern hill where she could look all around the battlefield of Taka castle received a further shock.

*“dammit, it has begun? Don’t shot it! The bullet of Kunikuzushi. Don’t shot Iehisa at Taka castle!”* Sagara Yoshiharu watched Kuroda Kanbei’s command at the right side of Sorin while being handcuffed as the most important list of hostage.

He has been taken away by Muneshige from jail at Mushiga and moved to this Sou camp. *“chi. Yoshiharu. Even though its possible to get a reversal win if you managed to talk Otomo Sorin through love, did you lost your nerve? My Otouto is really is a good for nothing for not knowing what a woman is. As expected, should Onee-chan give you a lesson concerning the relationship between man and woman.....? how long do I have to remain as a hostage?”* Sagara Yoshihi who are saying nasty things to Yoshiharu are also being handcuffed.

*“Yoshiharu-dono. Yoshihi-dono. My apology. It is strategist-dono order to not let you free but in case that Sou camp has fallen, I will immediately remove your handcuff”* Tachibana Muneshige keep apologizing to the two of them for the whole time. Despite its her first campaign, she was entrusted with the authority of Sorin’s 20000 bodyguard unit.

And then with a chicken, Tocco riding on top of her head *"kora! I am the current head of Tachibana clan!"* is the young Tachibana Ginchiyo that forcefully hold Muneshige in her arms.

The four people have turned their gaze to the west which is different from the direction of Toshihisa forces that who is going right over to Takigawa right now.

Otomo Sorin looked pale when the battle had begun at last.

*".....what is that? That other side of the mountain.....something is moving. As if the mountain itself is walking and cause a landslide"*

Its because she suddenly pointed to an unexpected direction.

It approached from across the two rivers that flowed through Taka castle from a totally direction of Otomo army at the northern coast that confronted Shimazu army that lay out their camp in the southern coast.

At the west of Taka castle. The mountain which were located in upstream of Tanisetogawa and Takigawa.....the green forest that cover the mountain have begun to move slowly.

A landslide.....no it wasn't.

Its Otomo detached forces.

They throw away their armor and helmet. They are ambush troops which have their whole body covered by wooden branch and leaf. They have just traveled from the reckless marching route through the mountain that reaches from Takachiho to Taka castle.

*"don't tell. Is it an illusion?"* Otomo Sorin doubted. The four people looked at the direction that Sorin pointed. The four *"it isn't an illusion for certain"* answered Sorin back.

Sorin stand up from her namban chair and mutter while looking pale.

*"....."the time when the forest of Hyuga start attacking".....it came"*

*“what is it Sorin?” Yoshihi unintentionally asked her. “it’s the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin! It means that the time that foretold the ruin of Sorin has come! The forest of Hyuga has moved indeed!” Yoshiharu answered while looking at the moving forest in dumb surprises.*

*“a prophecy? What is that? When the forest of Hyuga start moving, Sorin would fall?”*

*“although a prophecy are just a prophecy until the end, Yoshihi-Neesan. All this time, Sorin has been bound and frightened by the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin. The Nikaikuzurenohen and all of those repeated death of her Otouto has been advancing according to the prophecy until now. But those are tragedies that couldn’t be avoided in the world of Sengoku era. It only became true by chance. Don’t tell me, the end.....I didn’t expect that the moment from the prophecy of Sorin’s ruin will come and be accomplished”*

*“but Yoshiharu. Didn’t Gaspard lead a detached force that goes over the mountain? Why does Gaspard make an action which would drives Sorin to ruin? Yoshiharu. Even though that person is your enemy, didn’t he want to make Otomo Sorin and Oda Nobuna allied to each other to make a kingdom of Christians at japan?”*

*“that’s right Yoshihi-Neesan. Furthermore, its too impossible for Gaspard who has no familiarity with the land to go over the mountain of Hyuga. Even at the historical fact of the battle of Mimigawa, the detached force that cross over the mountain wouldn’t be in time for the battle. As for what is exactly happening, I don’t understand it either”*

*“even Gaspard-sama weren’t able to overturn the prophecy! Gaspard-sama make the Ashigaru troops to discard their heavy armament in order to cross over the steep mountain. They weren’t discovered by Shimazu army because they camouflage themselves with branches and leaves. As a result, it accidentally.....the forest of Hyuga moved.....its already.....the end.....”*

*“as expected, you weren’t supposed to start a fight at Hyuga” Tachibana Muneshiga stood up next to Sorin who cover her face while being scared.*

*“no milord. In order to suppress Tsuru no Buse, Kuroda Kanbei-dono allowed the enforcement to cross over the mountain which were originally wouldn’t succeeded. The first plan which are the excellent plan is to capture Neshirosaka first to completely surround Taka castle and obstruct Shimazu’s rear army. ut this plan has been destroyed by Shimazu army forced march. But, after Kanbei-dono has anticipated that capturing Neshirosaka would be difficult, she has made an absolutely secret second plan that would be chosen as the most likely picked plan. In this, the Otomo army has taken the west which is the blind spot for both armies. The 30000 vanguard in the northern coast and the detachment forces in the west mountain would attack Shimazu forces in reverse pincer movement. Its called “*

Hidden Fishing Field-Reversal

*Tsuru no Buse - Gaeshi” so to speak. Both army are equal in this. The detached force that gathered at the forest of Hyuga is approximately 3000 soldiers. Perhaps, the man who command the detached forces wouldn’t be Gaspard. A high soldiers morale are needed in order to make this difficult march succeed. Therefore, Gaspard, Frois and the other missionary should’ve stop at Takachiho”*

*“I see! Is this Kanbei’s plan?! Certainly, it would be difficult for Shimazu army to liberate Taka castle if Tsuru no Buse are being suppressed” Yoshiharu nodded.*

*“Muneshige? So who lead the detached forces on behalf of Gaspard-sama?!” Sorin raises her voice. “there is no mistake. Its my Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono. Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun. Besides, there is no other generals who can carry out such difficult march” Muneshige answered.*

*“eeh? Then does that mean that Tachibanayama castle is empty?!” Ginchiyo involuntarily raises her voices.*

*“y-yes. Ginchiyo-dono. Both Tachibanayama castle and Iwaya castle are empty. Its because these two people can rally and lead the whole army by themselves. They couldn’t help to do that of we consider the amount of soldiers that will be lost during this forced route of crossing the mountain”*

*“then. Dosetsu and Shoun has unexpectedly.....fulfilled the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin without being aware of it. Dosetsu is an ardent believer of Usa*

*Hachiman-jin. All of it, was fated right?.....as expected, Sorin would perish, isn't it? Mushiga would turn to ash, isn't it?"*

*As what Sorin said "have the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin has been fulfilled? Or does Kanbei implement her plan because the detached force that cross over the mountain has just arrive on time to move the situation of the war to our advantage?" does this battle become the battle of Mimigawa, or will it become the battle of Neshirosaka? Or will it become an ending that nobody knew about?*

Even Yoshiharu don't understand the tendency of the battle anymore.

*"with this, its impossible for both Otomo and Shimazu army to attack carelessly. Toshihisa forces decided to use Tsuru no Buse tactic and set out s the decoy unit but this decoy has become useless because the west mountain has been taken by Otomo detached forces. On the contrary, Toshihisa will be attacked in pincer movement and have no other choice but to withdraw again to Neshirosaka. Both sides are equal in this. Would there be any continuation of the medium plan beyond this point?"*

Yoshihi narrow her eyes and stare at the west mountain.

*"it is indeed an inscrutable stratagem. But Kanbei's tactic are too large in scale. Even if there is a continuation of the medium plan, it has to be settled splendidly"*

*"no. unfortunately, I think the action and mind has yet to be decided. Yoshihi-dono"*

Yoshiharu doubted his ear.

*"Muneshige? What does that mean? Does Kanbei made a mistake in this decisive battle?"*

*"yes. Perhaps Kanbei-dono's strategy would be the best preparation that a human strategist could ever made. But I'm afraid this strategy is a failure. The reason for that is because Kanbei-dono don't know about the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin"*

Tachibana Muneshige seemed to have already prepared for something *"kora! do something about Tachibanayama castle somehow! Ryuzoji clan will stole it!"* she quietly hugged Ginchiyo's body who is making noises and whispered to her kindly.

*"Ginchiyo-dono. It was a marriage life that were similar to playing house between women. Something is weird but if Kanbei-dono's prediction is right, then Tachibanayama castle is safe. Even if I disappear, Ginchiyo-dono will protect Tachibanayama castle as the present head of Tachibanayama clan"*

*"wha--?" what are you saying Muneshige? Did you eat something strange?"*

*"koke?"*

Did Tachibana Muneshige was preparing for some unexpected things?

Just like that time when she accidentally hear the content of the prophecy that Sorin recited, it was the same when she was talking while eating the rice and soup and looking at the night sky. Right now, the expression of Muneshige who lifted and cradling Ginchiyo.....it's a gentle smiling face of a pubescent girl showed to a child. Its not a tense warrior visage of "Nishikoku Musou".

*"goodbye, <sup>My Wife</sup> Waga Tsuma" Tachibana Muneshige whispered. "Muneshige??" she lowered Ginchiyo who is looking blankly and her pet Tocco into the ground.*

*"w-w-w-w-what the hell is happening!? Are you feeling bad? Aren't you going to swing and throw away Ginchiyo just like the usual?! Don't tell me, you are actually fall in love with Ginchiyo?? With a fellow w-w-w-w-woman???"*

*"kokokokoke~?"*

*"fufu. As expected, its impossible for women to be married couple with each other. Both of us have a relationship just like Ane and her Imouto....."*

*"koraa!!! stop saying things like a farewell before death!!"*

*<sup>Straight Sword</sup>*  
Muneshige unsheathe a Chokuto from the scabbard that she carry at her back and stabbed it under her feet.

*"Ginchiyo-dono. I want you to have this Chokuto. It was given by my Oyaji-dono when I was adopted to Tachibanayama clan. it's the unbending and unbreakable*

*<sup>Excellent Sword</sup>*

*Meito "Ken-Nagamitsu". Oyaji-dono said not to hesitate and kill with this sword if*

*Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono are fighting. For me, it's a treasured sword which were given by both of my father. Please treat it carefully"*

*"idiot! Don't let go such valuable things like that!"*

At this time, Sorin is still sitting down on her namban chair while covering her face and scared.

*"the forest of Hyuga"* she cannot looked directly to her fate.

Sagara Yoshiharu didn't how things will turn out but he noticed that he must stop Tachibana Muneshige.

Yoshiharu wasn't able to read Tachibana Muneshige's words and the true meaning of her action but he understand this.

Tachibana Muneshige will boldly break the stalemate that Kanbei created.

She will charge at Otomo army after this and die in battle.

Why?

Why is that?

*".....Sagara Yoshiharu-dono. This Tachibana Muneshige know the meaning of the prophecy. When I heard about the prophecy at Mushiga, I understand it"*

*"prophecy.....meaning? Interpretation you say? Saying such thing at your own discretion"*

*"perhaps, my Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono has been aware about the content of the prophecy a long time ago.....all this time when I was raised and love by my two fathers was for this exact day. The reason why me and Ginchiyo-dono have to be married couple between women, I understand it. As expected, when I am aware of my fate, my hearts was confused but....."*

That expression. It was smile that only belong to a dying person.

It was the same smile with Yoshihi had when she said goodbye to Yoshiharu to protect Tokuchiyo.

*“wait. What do you mean? Didn’t Kanbei had polished her plan to suppress Tsuru no Buse? she even recruit Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun. And yet.....you intent to die for nothing? After the old Tachibana Dosetsu died, what will happen to the future you who live to defend Otomo clan as “Nishikoku Musou”?! I know about your future.....no. you shouldn’t have met such ending! Even though yours is full of hardships, its still a bright future!”*

*“there is no time left to explain. I was raised by my two father in order to become milord’s Otouto if its possible”*

*“can you agree on that? At least, please explain the reason!”*

*“please forgive me! If you stop me any further, my determination will be disturbed.....Yoshiharu-dono. If I don’t stand up here, you will die. Therefore I was able to make my decision”*

*“I will die? What do you mean Muneshige?!”*

*“Sagara Yoshiharu-dono. I was happy to meet you.....I’m sorry”*

Yoshihi who were handcuffed cling to Muneshige.

*“Yoshiharu! I still don’t know the content of the prophecy. I also don’t know what will happen.....but Muneshige must be stopped! You have to stop her even by force. If not Kanbei’s strategy will fall!”*

*“u-understood Yoshihi-Neesan! Anyway, Muneshige, we will talk later!”*

However, Yoshiharu were also handcuffed like Yoshihi. although those two were going to stop Muneshige, it was impossible with their situation where their hands are tied.

Muneshige throw down those two with staggering blow and make them temporarily faint while closing her eyes “uuh”, “.....guuh.....” she removes their handcuff and mounted her horse.



*“aa? Sa-sagara sibling has lost! You want to ignore strategist-dono’s plan and rampage recklessly?! Damn you Muneshige! This Ginchiyo will stop you!”*

Ginchiyo struggles to pull out Ken-Nagamitsu that was stabbed to the ground to stop Muneshige with force but because Ginchiyo’s strength is weak, it doesn’t move. Tocco thrust its bill to the sword to help Ginchiyo. But of course, even if a chicken hit it with its bill, it wouldn’t come off. And yet, it still keep thrusting its beak to the sword.

*“uuu! Come off! Come off!!!!”*

*“koke! Koke! Koke~!!!”*

*“Dosetsu and Shoun know about the prophecy? What do you mean.....?”* Sorin quietly stared at Muneshige from the gap of her fingers that covers her face while trembling.

*“.....although you have promise never to abandon Sorin. And yet, you want to go to the frontline Muneshige? What will happen to this 20000 bodyguard units? What should Sorin do?”*

*“milord doesn’t have to move this Sou camp. They are soldiers that are necessary at the time for retreat when we were defeated by Shimazu forces. There is no problem. Please look at the moment when fate are overturned here. And as for the result, whether this battle would end in victory or defeat are not something we can understand without trying. And regardless of victory or defeat, I guarantee only this. This Tachibana Muneshige as the last Otouto of the lord.....will complete the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin”*

*“guardsmen! This is my last order, don’t move! The only time you will move is when you make the lord to retreat from the battlefield safely!”* Muneshige gave an order to the pumpkin soldier girl. Thus, their movement stopped suddenly. Muneshige has already gained enormous trust from them during this march. Everyone yearns and worship Muneshige’s noble and extraordinary bravery. Muneshige’s order is absolute.

*“you are absolutely going? Can’t Sorin protect her Otouto this time too? Would my Otouto will hold out and myself are the sole survivor again”*

*“but, the cycle of the prophecy will end today. With this milord can live freely”*

*“.....Muneshige.....! This is an order from the present head of Otomo clan! if you are ordered to die by the lord, then you will die! That’s why, listen to Sorin’s order! Don’t go! You mustn’t die!”*

*“my apology. I am refusing this order. Right now I am doing this with my own will. Its not because I am ordered by someone or because I am taught by my fathers, but.....this is the path that I have picked myself. This is my selfishness”*

*“Muneshige?”*

*“even if don’t move, both Gifu-jo and Oyaji-dono will rushed to Shimazu Toshihisa’s forces at Kawahara sandbank. At that time, Kuroda Kanbei-dono’s medium plan will collapse. As the result Kanbei-dono will have to use the bad plan. If she used the bad plan, Sagara Yoshiharu-dono will choose death”*

*“I don’t understand! But if that’s the case then Sagara Yoshiharu will be restrained and absolutely wouldn’t be released. He won’t be allowed to go out from Sou camp. That’s why”*

*“.....if I go, Yoshiharu-dono’s life will be protected. If Yoshiharu-dono’s life is protected, then milord will be free from the prophecy. I will sink myself to the bottom of Takigawa and die. If I fight then Shimazu army will fall apart. But that isn’t a dream to bring victory to Otomo clan. Don’t give up till the very end. All of the things in my hand.....I will fight to obtain it”*

*“sink yourself to the bottom of Takigawa? Muneshige, don’t tell me that you? The thing that Dosetsu and Shoun did.....does that mean that, for this moment, you are.....for the sake of this very day.....”*

*“this is your insight, milord”*

At that time, Sorin finally understood. Tachibana Muneshige. Tachibana Dosetsu. Takahashi Shoun. Tachibana clan. The things that they are trying to do.

*“don’t! stop it.....! I am sorry for everything until now. I won’t believe in prophecy anymore. Never. I will certainly overcome it. Therefore, don’t do die for such stupid reason!”*

*“I am thankful milord. But it’s the same as throwing away our loyalty to our lord. I cannot throw away Gifu-jo, Oyaji-dono and Sagara Yoshiharu-dono. Milord. If the fortunes of war of Tachibana clan is defeated then please retreat from the battlefield as soon as possible with the 20000 bodyguard unit, 30000 vanguard unit”*

*“Muneshige! Are you really alright with this? Wait please reconsider!”*

*“I am blessed with families and love, therefore I am happy”* Muneshige laughed.

*If I didn’t meet Yoshiharu-dono, my heart would be stained after I curse my unreasonable fate that came suddenly. But it didn’t happen. Things called as my own life, happiness, anguish, agony and elation of a girl, I never understand it. But in just several days, it was given to me. Besides, milord will be free from the prophecy and Sagara Yoshiharu-dono will be saved. This is alright.....milord. The future that Usa Hachiman-jin foretold, I will accomplished it in Taka castle and overturn it. We the Tachibana clan will free milord from her fate. Please have a good dream.....*

...

...

Otomo detached forces integrated with the forest of Hyuga and begun to descend from the mountain.

Just like Tachibana Muneshige has said, the general who command the detached forces are.

*“behold, behold Shoun! Hime-sama herself departed to the battlefield! Hime-sama will be defeated if we are defeated by Shimazu army! eei. That Harima kid, just stop doing absurd things!”*

The “Raijin” Tachibana Dosetsu who had crossed the route of the death mountain had abandon Tachibanayama castle and personally come over on top of a palanquin.

*“its alright. Hime-sama places herself at the rear where she can escape if she wanted to escape. The Otomo 20000 bodyguard units is the showy soldiers to prevent Shimazu army suicide attack, Oyassan. Kuroda Kanbei’s plan originally was to led the 30000 vanguards and along with the detached forces that we brought and then brought Shimazu army in a pincer attack. Its seems to be a plan to force the Shimazu army’s prided sure kill tactic – Tsuru no Buse out. Even though she is young, she is a great strategist, Namusanda”*

Similarly, there is Takahashi Shoun who abandon Iwaya castle and protected and carry Dosetsu all the way with 763 Shuras subordinate.

Gaspard who left Mushiga occupied Takachiho and was going to start a subversive activity under the pretense of investigating the precinct of Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple. These two brave general who shouldn’t have able to move out from Chikuzen appeared and then join Frois to desperately prevent Gaspard “*you aren’t supposed to disturb Takachiho*”. Gaspard was prevented and stop at Takachiho. There were a lot of passionate Christians soldiers that follow Gaspard but they were surprised by the sudden appearance of “Raijin” and “Gishou” that they didn’t expect and followed them. The soldiers are also Shuras who have survived through the war of Kyushu. Their awe and feeling of respect to the living “Raijin” are superior than their faith to god. After Dosetsu takes the authority over the soldiers from Gaspard as it is, they managed to led the detached force to successfully cross over Takachiho.

*“.....I see. Don Simon invited you from Chikuzen so that the detached forces can cross over the mountain. A bold tactic indeed.....fufu, alright then. Its impossible for me who doesn’t have any familiarity with Hyuga to across the mountain. It doesn’t seem that I can refuse. To begin with, I want to look for a treasure tool concerning the myth of japan at Takachiho. Subversive activity aren’t my main purposes. If you can guarantee my searching activity then I will leave the authority over the soldiers*

to you” Gaspard admitted defeat at the contest of wits against Kanbei and stayed at Takachiho.

*“.....because he might still do a subversive activity, I shall watch over Gaspard-sama”* Frois remain as an observer.

All of Dosetsu and Shoun’s lightning fast action were all because of Kuroda Kanbei’s instruction.

*“but how will Harima kid intent to do to steal the victory from the enemy Shimazu army? even if it just the 2<sup>nd</sup> day, if the situation of the war come to a stalemate then Ryuzoji Takanobu will move! No, that overlord who is known for his cruelty will move to steal Tachibanayama castle! To begin with, Otomo army hardly bring any provision in order to raise their marching speed to the maximum!”*

*“I am not sure. We the men of Shuras doesn’t have wisdom to understand that Harima kid until that extent. Me and Oyassan are battle idiots. That’s what I can say.....”*

*“it’s unfortunate for the Harima kid but I never have any intention to move as the kid’s pawn in the first place. Sorry kid.....”*The moment when the forest of Hyuga begin to attack” has suddenly come. Such coincidence will never come again. that’s why, we can only carry out the previous plan into practice. This time as well”

*“the fate of that person. No matter how much we apologizes to Muneshige, our apology aren’t enough.....mattaku. Namusanda”, “Shoun. It was all began when I was in my younger days serving Hime-sama as her direct retainers, I eavesdropped the conversation between Xavier-dono and Hime-sama without permission”*

*“really. The prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin shouldn’t have been heard carelessly. What a terrible bargain, for you to pull out Muneshige.....namusanda”*

*“this is the heaven’s will.....Shoun, even though I know about the prophecy,could I protect Hachiro-dono at the battle of Imayama? Originally, it was my daughter Ginchiyo who will become the sacrificial lamb”*

*"Oyassan. Don't say any further. It begun when I overhead this prophecy. That's why me.....and my daughter will put an end to the prophecy that tied Hime-sama. You cannot make Ginchiyo die"*

*"but, you don't have to keep up with this farce Shoun. You are not the key to overturn the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin. The one which is necessary is this Tachibana Dosetsu and Tachibana Muneshige's life"*

*"so you are going? Am I the only one who will survive from the beginning while letting my daughter and Oyassan to die? Give me a break. Today I will die together with Oyassan and Muneshige. After sending Muneshige to Takigawa, I will die in battle. That would at least be my atonement.....namusanda. But.....we have made Muneshige to have a strong mind like a boy. The last work to order Muneshige to die in battle.....is too heavy. I really cannot do it"*

*"it's the same for me Shoun. But, in order to liberate Hime-sama who continued to suffer from the prophecy, we have no choice but to carry out the plan at this very moment. Today war is exactly the only one time opportunity to rescue Hime-sama. I am feeling fine....."*

*".....hee. You are the one who suggested Muneshige as the sacrificial lamb.....that's not something you should say in these late hours. You and I have become old"*

*"I cannot possibly give a letter through a messenger that say "die with us" to Muneshige. Would Muneshige fall into despair over her own fate? Or will she mourn over her two father's heartlessness? No. maybe because I am getting old, I am easily moved to tears now. that's impossible. I simply cannot order Muneshige to face death....." Dosetsu looked the Sou camp that protect Sorin from the steep slope while having his eyes blurry from tears.*

*"Oyassan! Look! Its Muneshige! She.....seemed to have realized everything before we send a messenger to reveal the plan! It appears that somehow, she seemed to have know the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin! She have begun to charge to Shimazu army who has moved to Kawahara sandbank that spread in front of Taka castle! She cross over Tanisetogawa after breaking through the barrage of arrows!"*

Takahashi Shoun shouted when he find Muneshige's figure charging at large Shimazu decoy unit that were led by Shimazu Toshihisa. the retainers that follow Muneshige are only numbered approximately 500 men. By Muneshige's strict order, almost 20000 bodyguard units weren't moving from Sorin's Sou camp.

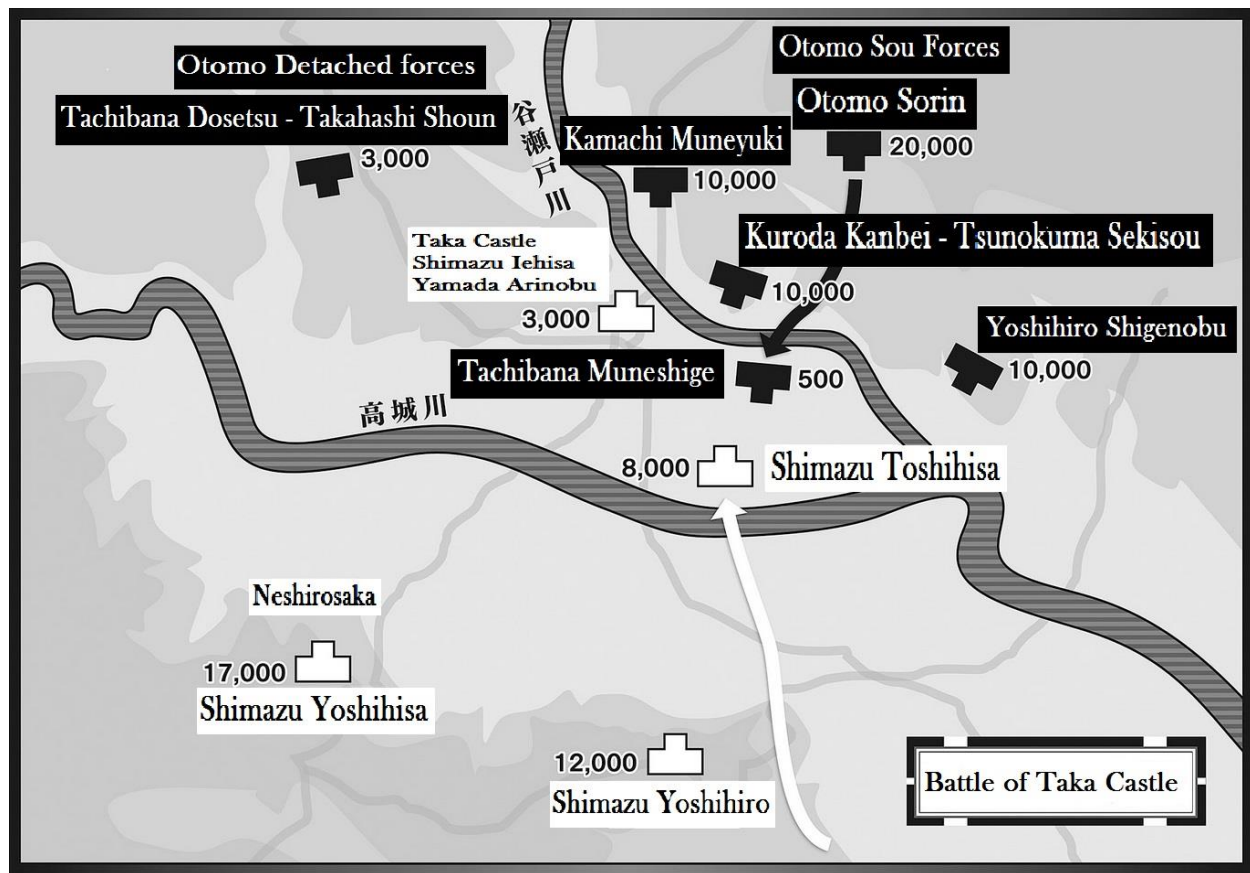
*"what! that idiot! Leaving behind her two father and charging ahead alone!"*

*".....we doesn't want to say "Muneshige, please die". That's because you and me think that desire is more painful than dying"*

*"at least.....at the very least, can't she left a single grudge to us before dying! Just how much of a good child is she.....?!"*

*"namusanda. We will charge at the entire army too! I am sorry for putting in such unreasonable and difficult situation everyone! If you bear a grudge, then bear a grudge against Dosetsu-Oyassan who made such absurd plan to emancipate Hime-sama from the curse of a prophecy!"*

"The Forest of Hyuga" – all men of Shura raises a battle cry simultaneously.



All of the combined soldiers that Muneshige leads along with retainers since her time at Takahashi clan, are carefully selected retainers group that Dosetsu added to Muneshige's own when she became the son in law of Tachibana clan – numbered approximately 500 men. It's a reckless differences between the strength of an army. *"what are you doing?! Tachibana Muneshige, go back to Sou camp!"* Kuroda Kanbei who sat upon the strategist exclusive vehicles changed her expression while Muneshige cross over the flank of Kanbei's camp to cross over Tanisetogawa. Shimazu 8000 decoy unit begun to spread out at Kawahara sandbank at the front of Taka castle.....she plunged into Shimazu Toshihisa forces.

Shimaxu Toshihisa cannot understand the meaning of this sudden appearance of this small 500 units that come out from Sorin's rear Sou camp.



*“what? what is that? What one earth does Otomo army and Kuroda Kanbei want to do? The detached force that arrived from the west mountain should’ve been able to seal Tsuru no Buse and yet.....even so, why are they plunging in? are they crazy?”*

Toshihisa cross the river and stand out at Kawahara sandbank in order to lure Otomo vanguard. But she was surprised by Muneshige’s reckless attack as well as Otomo 3000 detached force that were being led by Tachibana Dosetsu that appeared from the west mountain of Taka castle.

Will they face Otomo 30000 vanguard units in the north or dealing with Tachibana Dosetsu’s unit that suddenly appeared from the west? Even Toshihisa weren’t able to guess it at all. Before their battle formation are set, their flank are attacked by Tachibana Muneshige unit that cross the river with desperate looks.

Tachibana Muneshige held a tightly strung bow and shot an arrow one after another from horseback. She recklessly rushed to Toshihisa and shot Toshihisa army officers one after another.

No one among Toshihisa forces about that young samurai. She is a greenhorn who has a capacity as a Shura. But, Muneshige’s archery doesn’t belong in the realm of human’s feat. From her delicate body, she unbelievably draw the tightly strung bow to its limit. The arrow flies while cutting through the wind at dreadful speed. And then the arrow bend in the air. To the right. To the left. Or it suddenly make a nose dive from overhead.

The wind. By reading the wind of the battlefield that were flowing freely, the trajectory of the arrow was bend. The veteran Shura of Toshihisa army understand it until that extend. But no one can predict its trajectory.

They noticed that this sweet girlish young samurai is the ultimate weapon of Otomo army which were said as the ultimate Shura among the perfect Shuras.

*“I found you Shimazu Toshihisa-dono. My name is Tachibana Muneshige. Son of Takahashi Shoun and son in law of Tachibana Dosetsu! My life will be finished at Takigawa today. I will break Shimazu army siege!”*

Tachibana Dosetsu army as well *“support Muneshige! Scatter Toshihisa’s army! go!!”* run down and spread out from the slope beside Taka castle and rushed forward.

The hemiplegic Dosetsu who sat cross legged upon a palanquin found the figure of Muneshige who is running at the battlefield *“you idiot! Don’t leave us behind and jumped to death selfishly!”* and shouted.

*“only for today that I will take an absent of carrying Oyassan’s palanquin upon my shoulder. This Takahashi Shoun will draw his word after a long time. This is the last time I shall draw my sword. Namusanda!”*

Takahashi Shoun covered his head with jet black Gyoujin-Tsutsumi headgear.

*“Gifu-jo! Oyaji-dono! I have understand it entirely. I have heard the prophecy of the lord’s downfall from Usa Hachiman-jin at Mushiga. the conclusion of the lord’s downfall. The lord has always been scared of something despite ruling as the queen of six countries of Kyushu. The cause of her suffering, I have finally realized it. Today is the day that the prophecy will be fulfilled. “when the forest of Hyuga start attacking, your glory above the ground will end there”.....”*

Muneshige repeat the words from the 3 old women who is the envoy of Usa Hachiman-jin while drawing a tightly strung bow to its limit and shooting one after another.

On top of the palanquin *“die die! All of you, we are setting off a road to the underworld together in order to overturn Hime-sama’s fate”* Dosetsu with his hoarse voice have succeed that words while having tears in his eyes.

*“but, Hime-sama’s fortunes of war and are still hasn’t been decided yet Muneshige! The old women said! “even with snow fallen on the fiery battlefield, as long as there is no Otouto submerge in the water as a sacrifice”.....in other words, if snow fall on the battlefield and the Otouto submerge in the water, the prophecy of the old women will be overturned! The fate of Hime-sama will be overturned!”*

And the blunt Takahashi Shoun blurted out the last phrase of the prophecy.

*“Yamato Takeru who has cursed by Watatsumi during his expedition to Togoku give his wife Ototachibanahime as a sacrifice”. I am sorry Muneshige. Because I eavesdropped on Hime-sama story, I have made you as a sacrifice. Namusanda”*

The smart Tachibana Muneshige have promptly understood her role and bigger picture of Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun plan at the same time when she heard the content of Sorin’s prophecy.

Sorin has made every effort to emancipate herself from the curse of the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin. Devoting herself into Zen Buddhism and repeated ascetic practices of Zen meditation. Converting to Christianity. Burning down Usa Hachiman shrine. It was all a fight to free herself from the prophecy of her fate and ruin of killing her own Otouto that began from “Nikaikuzurenohen”. Fighting against the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin who has overwhelming authority at Kitakyushu. Its different than the battle between samurai and war of samurai that end perfectly in victory or defeat. Especially for someone like the intelligent Sorin who cannot believe in something blindly.

*“the Tachibana clan rebel to Hime-sama and I unexpectedly take over Tachibanayama castle. At the time I decided to be the new present master of Tachibana clan that it flashed to me! That this is my destiny! Usa Hachiman-jin and Hachiman Daibosatsu give me once in lifetime opportunity to free Hime-sama from the prophecy!”*

*“I am a Shura of Kyushu who devoted his life to war. I am a soldier. I don’t believe in prophecy. But. The prophecy of Nikaikuzurenohen were proven right and Hime-sama’s heart were violently crushed and perfectly tied and imprisoned. I have no choice but to make the prophecy of one of the future where ruin doesn’t come to be fulfilled. The old women prepared 2 ending for the prophecy. I have no choice but to create an exceptional miracles to overturn the ruin in the future. when the forest of Hyuga began to attack.....bringing snow to the fiery battlefield and sink the body of Ototachibanahime to the river.....”*

*“Shoun! If it was a princess during the era of Yamato Takeru then its should be natural to call themselves as Imouto. It’s a strange myth to call themselves as*

Otouto. Why does the old women who invent the prophecy to curse Hime-sama use Ototachibanahime as the name of the sacrifice? I have noticed. “can you kill your own Otouto in order to overturn the fate of your ruin? No you won’t” the old women has casted double curses to Hime-sama! The old women gave 2 choices to Hime-sama “the future where you made your Otouto as a sacrifice and avoid the downfall” and “the future where Hime-sama refuse to sacrifice and she perish”. Of course since Hime-sama’s heart is gentle, she can only select the future where she will perish. Therefore, I put a character called an “Otouto” as the name for the sacrifice! Therefore the old women recited the myth of Yamato Takeru’s wife – Ototachibanahime in their prophecy! Furthermore, because Hime-sama keep on losing her Otoutos due to misfortune, Hime-sama is finally being imprisoned by the prophecy and she start praying for her own ruin.....that is the reason why Gaspard was able to take over her heart. However Shoun and Muneshige. It flashed upon me. Tachibana(橘), and “Tachibana Kun’yomi”(たちばな) have the same sound with Tachibana clan(立花). “Ototachibanahime”(弟橘媛).....its useless with just a simple “Otomo Sorin’s Otouto”. Unless it was an Otouto who is also a princess. Furthermore, that person must belong to “Tachibana” (たちばな). It won’t work unless it was a “princess of Tachibana”(立花) and at the same is the Otouto of Otomo Sorin! this is the right interpretation of the prophecy! When the truly qualified “Ototachibanahime” sacrifice herself by sinking into the water, the fate of Hime-sama’s downfall will be overturned for the first time. At least when Hime-sama can believe in it!”

“hee. Aren’t Tachibana(橘) very different with Tachibana clan(立花)? That prophecy is a truly worthless wordplay. Oyassan’s idea aren’t the one that is crazy but rather is the underlying motive of the old women. After Oyassan succeeded Tachibana clan, you want to make your young daughter as a boy to become Hime’s Otouto.....you wanted to raise her as “Ototachibanahime”! in order to bring snow to fall on the fiery battlefield, you changed your name into “Dousetsu”(道雪). With Ginchiyo whom you raised as “Ototachibanahime”, you will perish in the battlefield of Hyuga! At the time during “the forest of Hyuga began to attack and the moment of downfall came” Hime-sama who despaired and scared will see it right in front of

Snow Path

Michi Yuki

*her. The moment when the fate is overturned. When Dosetsu perish in the burning battlefield and "Ototachibanahime" sink herself into the water as a sacrifice....."*

*"we will use the words of the old women prophecy that bind Hime-sama against them and conversely use it to overturn the prophecy of that ruin! As the result of our reckless charging, no matter what is the result of this war, we will free Hime-sama from the prophecy so that she can stand up on her own feet!"*

*"however, Ginchiyo are still too young to be put in a battlefield. Furthermore, the nonsense that Oyassan was talking about before was originally my responsibilities. That's why.....Muneshige. I am sorry since I decided to raise you up as Ototachibanahime instead of Ginchiyo. Even though Oyassan objected if I cannot drag the daughter of Takahashi clan, I overcome it. That was the reason. I am sorry"*

*".....we will die an honorable death in order to escort you Muneshige to Takigawa. As for the later measures, I am sure that Harima kid will accomplish it. Me and Shoun's loyalty to Hime-sama.....our loyal hearts.....may not be known or praised by anyone. Muneshige. We are trying to make you who had infinite potential, to offer you as a sacrifice. We even take the 3000 and 500 soldiers to go along with us. It might an insanity. In the life of battle where it would always continue even after I die, at the very least, I keep continue to hold my loyalty to milord and keep protecting it. But I might not have any possibility on doing that.i was once cut a lightning and became paralyzed at one side of my body and yet, I wasn't able to rescue Hime-sama. Retainers will be useless without demonstrating "Ototachibanahime" from the prophecy. We know that we couldn't save Hime-sama.....but everything was because of my selfish way of living through loyal heart. Bringing down Hime-sama from the seat of the present head of Otomo clan should've been the right way that I should take as a person. Despite this, I didn't give much freedom to Hime-sama. When I brought Hime-sama to Aka Yahata shrine, even though I should've been able to send her quietly to another country, to the point that I was struck by lightning right in front of Hime-sama's eyes, I tied Hime-sama to the seat of the present head of Otomo clan. I am also a selfish person like the old women who called themselves as the envoy of Usa Hachiman-jin. But without it, we weren't able to involve you in this plan"*

*“oi oi. You seem to have lost your edge due to old age when you complain about your deeds at this late time. You are originally born as a man who keep on doing things recklessly without thinking about the consequences. The selfish one is me, Oyassan”*

*“you wanted to be forgiven while also didn’t want to be forgiven” Muneshige smiles on the horseback.....*

*“Gifu-jo. Oyaji-dono. Please don’t apologize. I am also the same. I live for battle. It’s the law of us the Shura of Kyushu to die in battle.....we can’t survive without believing in the relationship with somebody.....its only a mere beast that murder a person if they didn’t believe in relationship with somebody, in loyalty, in faith and in love.....meanwhile I was loved and raised by my two father until this much. There is no Shura who is as happy as me in Kyushu. However in turn, our lord wasn’t given a love from a father or affection from a mother. Therefore, there is a big gaping hole inside the Lord’s heart. No matter how much does the retainer pour it with their loyal heart or faith from the Christians missionary, it will leaked out. Even if Gifu-jo set the lord free from Aka Yahata shrine, even if the lord are free from the cage called the present head of Otomo clan, her heart will not be saved. The Otoutos who knew about the lord’s suffering, all of them have fall down in the middle of enacting their intention without overturn the prophecy.....but if the forest of Hyuga start to attack, we can put an end to our lord’s curse of killing her own Otoutos. We the Tachibana clan all together will give our loyalty to the lord, no.....lets carry our feeling to our lord. I will break through the Shimazu forces and finally arrive at the bottom of Takigawa’s water”*

*“furthermore, if the situation arise where we have to use Kanbei-dono’s bad plan then as the result, Sagara Yoshiharu-dono will die in order to stop it. I don’t merely die but also fight for the limit of my life and win against Shimazu army. I will die after making Shimazu army be routed at Kawahara sandbank and after I arrive at Takigawa. This is my selfishness” Muneshige muttered while shooting her last arrow. With this, her arrow was exhausted. Tachibana force is surrounded by the swarming Shimazu Toshihisa army that are doubles of their own. Nonetheless, the Tachibana forces led by “Raijin” will not retreat for even one step.*

*“oo. Is it the rumored Sagara Yoshiharu? Are you in love with him Muneshige?”*

*“yes! It appears that I couldn’t be able to become a man!”*

*“I don’t mind. This is the end of your everyday life as a man. so become honest with your feeling! Because he is fine at first glance, I wanted to meet Sagara Yoshiharu-dono! That will be my only regret!”*

*“hee. Your face has become that of a maiden’s Muneshige. I have heard your first and last selfishness. Namusanda”*

*“please wait a moment. Oyaji-dono didn’t appear in the prophecy so you don’t have to die in here”*

*“don’t say that. I am your father. This is my selfishness”*

Shimazu Toshihisa army which has finished arranging their formation escapes from the confusion and surround the Tachibana forces from right to left and was about to constrict them and then.....from the hill from the other side of the river, an explosion rang out when a single blow from “Kunikuzushi” exploded with a dreadful column of flames.

Kuroda Kanbei changed the launching angle of “Kunikuzushi” that aimed at Taka castle walls in a hurry in order to rescue Tachibana forces that come out to the dry riverbed beyond Tanisetogawa. She made it to be shot at Shimazu Toshihisa force that spread out at Kawahara sandbank.

*“s-strategist-dono.....! You use “Kunikuzushi” in order to support us at the melee battlefield?! We are in your debt.....!”*

*“it’s a dreadful column of flames. Don’t get burn Muneshige. The battlefield of Hyuga are surrounded and burned by flames.....the moment when the prophecy are fulfilled is coming”*

*“hmph. Even if I will be accidentally piled up here, I don’t know whether it can be called as fate anymore. Namusanda”*

...

...

Shimazu Toshihisa forces that received a fierce attack from Kunikuzushi and Tachibana force that doesn't think about retreat have begun to fall apart.

Nevertheless, Toshihisa didn't retreat. Tsuru no Buse tactic seemed to have been broken when Tachibana army appeared from the west mountain. now that Tachibana forces that come out to Kawahara sandbank has been lured, Toshihisa decided to stay at Kawahara sandbank and fight until she fall apart.

If she retreat, Kunikuzushi will be turned to lehisa who shut herself inside Taka castle again.

*".....I won't let lehisa die. As for an Imouto die before her Ane. I won't acknowledge it. Sagara Yoshiharu. the future of lehisa that you told me will never be in vain. I was given an opportunity to overturn lehisa's fate. That child's damaged past that I have continued to abuse in order to train her as the military expert of Shimazu army, I have yet to redeem my deed....."*

*"not yet. Tachibana 3500 forces aren't enough"* Toshihisa keep on fighting until the bitter end and destroyed until she lured 30000 vanguard unit that were commanded by Kuroda Kanbei to Kawahara sandbank.

Only after she is destroyed that Otomo 30000 army are able to cross the river.

*"not yet. We mustn't fall yet! We mustn't make lehisa be isolated at Taka castle! Throw away your whole life!"*

A bullet of Kunikuzushi landed immediately right in front of the horse that Toshihisa rode. The earth burst from the shock of the crash and her direct subordinates are blown away along with their horses. Toshihisa's delicate body fell from horseback.

*"Shimazu Toshihisa-dono! I demand a one on one duel!"* leaving her tightly strung bow, Tachibana Muneshige unsheathe her katana in the middle of light brown cloud of dust and approach Toshihisa while riding a horse.

*"nyaa nyaa! Toshihisa-Nee?"*



Shimazu Iehisa who stared at the war situation that developed under her eyes while staying at Taka castle with 3000 soldiers change her expression and stood up while carrying a Tanegashima on her shoulder.

*“Sagara. Its impossible for me to keep shutting myself inside the castle and abandon Toshihisa-Nee. I cannot commit seppuku in order to prevent the battle anymore. I am sorry.....all army, sally forth!”*

*“all of you abandon the castle! Charge and bring storm of bullets to rear of Tachibana forces! For the sake of bringing success to this sure kill Tsuru no Buse tactic!”* the vice general Yamada Arinobu shouted and Taka castle gate is opened.

The 3000 castle guards that were being led by Shimazu Iehisa attacked Tachibana forces all at once with monkey-like clamor. Iehisa’s army are equipped with large amount of Tanegashima. They run and begun merciless gunshot before Tachibana forces are able to guard their rear.

*“don’t let them reach Toshihisa-Nee!”*

Toshihisa who fell from her horse cannot stand up. She seemed to have hurt her legs. Tachibana Muneshige approach Toshihisa. Shimazu Iehisa who come out to the field where arrows and bullets are flying around aimed and shot her Tanegashima to Tachibana Muneshige from horseback.

Next to her, Yamada Arinobu are also shot his Tanegashima silently at the same time.

However, Tachibana Muneshige lift and brandish the katana that she held in one hand and stopped the bullet. She cut down the bullet into two with one sword strike.

*“she can do that?”* Iehisa shouted.

It was a miraculous act that Iehisa has never seen before until now. there are still such kind of Shura in Otomo clan beside Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun.....

Shoun Style      Art of Drawing Sword      Beheading Counter

*“Shoun-ryu Battou-jutsu” Zan-Dan ”! Toshihisa-dono, prepare yourself!”*

Muneshige didn't stop. She didn't falter for even one step. Iehisa too whipped her horse to get closer to Toshihisa. although the enemy is a nameless Shura, she is a soldier whose ability and courage needs to be respected. There is no time to hesitate since they don't want to bring one-sided one against many gunfight. If they didn't kill this young samurai by full strength then Toshihisa and Iehisa will die.

*"stop it! You are fighting for the sake of dying, Tachibana Muneshige! I won't let you to involve Iehisa in this unreasonable fight!"* Toshihisa who is down to her knees after losing her horse held a Tanegashima hold her ground and aimed at Muneshige's head.

*"Yamada-don! Taka castle Teppo squad! All of you shot 10 rounds to that young Shura who wear a sun halo helmet!"*

*"understood! Shot 10 rounds!"*

Taka castle Teppo squad that run by a horse blow up 10 rounds of Tanegashima that were aimed at Tachibana Muneshige.

Toshihisa who squatted on the ground also fired her Tanegashima at the same time.

Toshihisa's shot from the lower position and 10 shots from the horseback. Their trajectories are different. Their angle is different.

Its impossible to blocked with one sword.

*"my limit is blocking 3 shots"* Muneshige thought so.

Among other things, Toshihisa's shot that came from lower position will become a fatal wound.....

(I cannot die yet! Until I sink my body in the water. I have yet to arrive at Takigawa across Kawahara sandbank.....!)

*"I became too zealous. I overestimated my ability. This is a battlefield. If this battle weren't my first campaign. In the end I will die before accomplish the prophecy"* Muneshige despaired.

However.

The bullet that should've pierced through Muneshige's head were cut down by a single katana that gleam dazzlingly.....

*"namusanda Muneshige! Don't forget the essence of ""Ki-Dan"! I have told you right! The secret of "Zan-Dan" is "not chasing the bullet with eyes, don't chase the sound, feel it through the wind" you know!"*

*"Oyaji-dono?!"*

*"its just a little more Muneshige! That Takigawa over there is yours and my Sanzu river! You are "The Ultimate Weapon of Otomo clan" that I have trained with great care. Compared to Kunikuzushi and Shimazu Teppo squad, you are strong! I will become the shield to cut down the barrage so run through until the end!"*

Takahashi Shoun who force his way to in front of Muneshige's horse use his sword as a shield to repel Shimazu army gunfire. Shoun appear to be a huge shield that protect Muneshige. Toshihisa and Iehisa were staring at Shoun's miraculous act after momentarily forgot that they were in the middle of life or death battlefield. They have understand the reason why the hemiplegic Tachibana Dosetsu who always rushes into the frontline is still survived. The lone sword that this blunt man wield has become the shield that protect Dosetsu.

*".....I understand Oyaji-dono! I am thankful!"*

*"Toshihisa-Nee, don't let them approach you! Shoot! Shoot!"* her voice is hoarse and Iehisa keep on shooting. But its not possible to give mortal injury to the parent and child duo Tachibana Muneshige who counter the bullets from horseback and Takahashi Shoun who did miraculous work while being close to Muneshige's horse. Even if the bullet pierces through Muneshige's crest and graze her helmet, even if its possible to inflict wound to Shoun's shoulder and legs, its impossible to obstruct those two's advance by shooting.

*"Iehisa! They don't merely fight to win! They are charging to die! They won't stop unless we shot their heart or brain with bullets! Run away!"*

It was an unbelievable scene. The dreadful demonic parent child duo is approaching. Any kind of ingenuity doesn't apply to martial arts that were elevated to the territory of divine works that transcend human being. It's the rule of Kyushu of Sengoku era. Toshihisa (my leg is injured when I fell from my horse. I cannot run away anymore. Only Iehisa) close her eyes and prayed. Toshihisa herself don't know to whom did she pray to.

...

...

Shimazu Yoshihisa who occupied the west side of Neshirosaka looked in dumb surprise at the situation war between Tachibana forces and both sides of Toshihisa and Iehisa that unfolded at Kawahara sandbank in front of Takigawa.

*"its too early for Iehisa-chan to strike from the castle. Kuroda Kanbei still hasn't been caught by Tsuru no Buse. she still hasn't been caught....."*

She stood up.

3500 Otomo army that were being commanded by Tachibana clan moved straight to Takigawa without hesitation while being attacked in pincer movement by Toshihisa from the front and Iehisa from the back. Do they intent to attack Neshirosaka across Takigawa. Kuroda Kanbei has already see through Tsuru no Buse. she made the detached force to come out from the western mountainside of the battlefield in order to force Tsuru no Buse out. In fact, Otomo 30000 vanguard are staying at the northern coast of Tanisetogawa without moving. Furthermore, Sorin's 20000 bodyguard unit that occupied the northern hills hardly moves an inch.

*"Sorin's 20000 bodyguard units and Tachibana detached forces are deployed for the sake of block the decoy unit and Tsuru no Buse. Kuroda Kanbei should've been intended to confront Shimazu 40000 soldiers with only 30000 vanguard units. When I see the forest of Hyuga moving, as expected from the strategist of the one who reign over the world – the Oda clan. Shimazu military tactic didn't get through. But I was astonished. Its incomprehensible"*

Yoshihisa wasn't able to understand the meaning of Tachibana forces reckless charge. Its certain that they ignore Kuroda Kanbei's command. What she understand clearly is that in this situation both Toshihisa and lehisa are in danger. Though they are superior in number, the bombardment to Taka castle from Kunikuzushi were quickly changed by Kanbei to the melee fight and the level of bizarre fighting spirit that are released by the officers of Tachibana army which were led by the legendary "Raijin" Tachibana Dosetsu were all beyond expectation. Even though the Shimazu army have met many deadly predicament through piles of repeated battles, they don't have experience about encountering such powerful enemy. Furthermore, its said to be the first campaign of the young warrior – Tachibana Muneshige with her prideful astounding bravery that not even lehisa's Teppo squad barrage could hit her.

If she sit down just like this then Toshihisa and lehisa will be killed before they can lure Otomo army.

*"Shimazu Yoshihisa 17000 main force will go down from Neshirosaka and cross Takigawa! If this reckless charge of Tachibana army are part of Kuroda Kanbei's strategy then in reverse, Shimazu army will be lured out instead.....but I cannot possibly let lehisa-chan and Toshihisa-chan to die without helping them.....!"*

Shimazu Yoshihisa army has advanced.....

...

...

At the same time, Shimazu Yoshihiro who set up a camp at the center of Neshirosaka with 12000 core unit for Tsuru no Buse,

*"forgive me Sagara Yoshiharu. the strength of Tachibana forces that has charged to Takigawa while abandoning their path for retreat from the beginning for the sake of dying an honorable death are not ordinary. With Tachibana forces has also block the path for retreat for lehisa army which has just appeared from Taka castle, lehisa and Toshihisa will die as well. its necessary to defeat that dreadful young warrior Tachibana Muneshige. I have no choice but to fight personally!"*

She gave an order to charge to the whole army and straddle her horse “Hizaori Kurige” to charge at Takigawa by herself.

Fresh Shimazu army dashed out from Neshirosaka. They are a large army with a total number of 29000 soldiers. They rush to Kawahara sandbank in order to annihilate 3500 Tachibana soldiers.

*“Sorin’s 20000 bodyguard units didn’t move until the end. The problems are the 30000 vanguard units that Kuroda Kanbei command. Even if we took an advantage from crushing the Tachibana force in order to cross Tanisetogawa, could we use Tsuru no Buse to the enemy of Shimazu army? or else.....”*

*I don’t understand the reason why the regulation of Otomo army has fall into complete disorder.*

*Now I just need to fight the enemies in front of me without hesitation.*

*“Shimazu Isshin Yoshihiro has come! Well done Tachibana Muneshige-dono! You are indeed “Nishikoku Muso”! I request a duel from you!”*

The Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro’s sortie has changed the situation of the war.

The Shuras of Tachibana force who keep on advancing even if they are stabbed or shot had become slightly restless.

When Tachibana Muneshige who charged towards Takigawa while breaking through the barrage of Tanegashima bullet with Takahashi Shoun who continues to protect his daughter on foot recognize the figure of Hizaori Kurige at the other side of the horizon,

*“she is the Takegami of Shimazu clan.....if at least one arrow is still remain”*

She muttered unintentionally. If she approached, if she jumped into Shimazu Yoshihiro’s katana attack range then Muneshige’s charge will end there.

However, Muneshige has no time to hesitate.

Shimazu Yoshihiro charge straight only to Muneshige while having a sharp glint from her eyes. Any person who tried to come in contact with will be knocked down. Her swordmanship is so fast that it cannot be seen. There is no wasted movement. There is no hesitation. Yoshihiro's katana spilt the enemies' vital point with a single blow. Yoshihiro would shed tears for the allied or enemy Shura who died and pray that their souls may rest in peace after the battle ended. She never hesitate when she was fighting. She will knock down every enemy in front of her eye with full strength. It might be Shimazu Yoshihiro's courtesy in the battlefield.

*"oi oi. What the heck is that? She is totally like <sup>Lu Bu</sup> Ryofu! She is more of a monster than I had heard! She is truly Oni-Shimazu, namusanda!"*

*"Oyaji-dono, I will go! That person is the last obstacle that I should surpass! If I can defeat Shimazu Yoshihiro.....then we can win this war! no. I won't be able to arrive at Takigawa if I don't defeat her! I will surpass her even I would lose one or both of my arm!"*

Tachibana Muneshige dashed forward to Shimazu Yoshihiro. The horse charged.

Soldiers who blocked between those two path are simultaneously scattered left and right.

*"that young samurai is a monster who has mastered Taisha-ryu and even learned Shoun-ryu Battou-jutsu "Zan-Dan", Nee-san! Furthermore, she doesn't hesitate to die at all! She is the ultimate Shura who has been raised just to die for this war! its dangerous even for Nee-san!"*

Tachibana Muneshige's route are slightly bended by Yoshihiro's appearance.....Toshihisa who has just been raised to horseback by lehisa who use the first last chance from when her Ane fell down due to injury, restrained Yoshihiro.

However, Shimazu Yoshihiro laughed.

When she thought that such kind of samurai is still hidden inside this Kyushu, her fighting spirit which overflowed from her body cannot be suppressed.

Secret Sword Art

*“its alright Toshihisa. I have a <sup>Hi-Ken</sup> to cut a monster.....it’s a tiger cub that I intended to be used against Kai Soun, but I cannot help but to use it! Tachibana Muneshige-dono, let’s duel!”*

*“Shimazu’s Hi-Ken.....if you keep being silent about it, my head would be lost in an instant from that sword technique. Shimazu Isshin-dono, you will regret it!”*

Secret Killing Sword Art

*“there is no regret! Shura who assumed this war as their first campaign aren’t only you. Taisha-ryu <sup>Goroshi no Hi-Ken</sup> that I have trained together with Tougou <sup>Chui</sup> Shigetaka. <sup>Revelation Style</sup> “Satsuma Jigen-ryu”.....!”*

Long Sword

Yoshihiro take out the Tachi that she keep sheathed inside the scabbard until now.....it’s a specialized weapon <sup>Large Sword</sup> “Odachi” that she hold up high over her head. I was just like a <sup>Horse Slaying Sword</sup> Zanbato .

Furthermore, Yoshihiro didn’t show any intention of defending. She didn’t think about her back when she swing that sword, it’s a stance of certain death blow. Muneshige’s helmet, armor and horse, all of them will be bisected by single blow from all of her might. Beyond that point.....she didn’t think about her own life from the beginning. It’s a strong sword that give one’s own life for each one kill at a time.

Dark Container User

Kura-ki Tsukai with self-taught wicked sword are needed to take down Kai Shoun. For that purpose, the Shimazu treasured young genius of sword – Toudou Shigetaka were sent for an ascetic journey to the capital of Kyoto. He combined Taisha-ryu Kenjutsu and Togoku Kenjutsu to sweep over Kyushu. The Shura <sup>Secret Shura Slayer Sword Art</sup> Goroshi no Hi-Ken . Yoshihiro’s mind didn’t think about her own life after killing Muneshige. She must cut her. Iehisa and Toshihisa were knocked down by the death soldiers of Tachibana forces that were being led by this “Nishikoku Musou”.

First Sight Killer

*“my strong sword is the certain kill “Shoken Goroshi”. Taisha-ryu aren’t acceptable. Muneshige-dono, prepare yourself.....!”*



The Odachi that Yoshihiro hold is much longer. That is the sword of Takegami. It's a stance that are full of opening. Yoshihiro is risking her own life. It would be unreachable even if she hammered it down from there. If the first strike are missed.....no, it can't miss. Muneshige who is in her horseback tried with a small possibilities of stopping Yoshihiro's strong sword with her own sword. However, it was clear that it would be a miracle if her sword are just merely broken or her helmet broken from resisting without having her head bisected.

*Ah. If I have my Ken-Nagamitsu in my grasp at this moment of death, I might be able to stop it. I regretted my immaturity.*

Certainly, she came down to this battlefield to die. But it was too early to hand over Ken-Nagamitsu to Ginchiyo as a keepsake. After all, its her first campaign. She will lose because of her optimistic sentiment. Soon Yoshihiro will unleash her Odachi. The strong sword which are unleashed from a strange art that abandon one's own defenses. Its impossible to estimate what kind of swordmanship it is. Its definitely a sword of Shoken Goroshi. Muneshige realized that her life will come to an end here. Just a bit more, she would arrive at Takigawa.

*".....Muneshige is an unworthy child. Good bye. Gifu-jo. Oyaji-dono"*

However.....

Yoshihiro wasn't able to swing down that Odachi.

*"if anything, this would be called as cowardice but.....I will not let you kill my daughter in place of another step!"*

There is one person who forced through to the personal combat between Muneshige and Yoshihiro.

Takahashi Shoun was about to cut Hizaori Kurige that Yoshihiro rides.

*"daughter!? She is a daughter?!"*

*"Oyaji-dono!?"*

*"don't avert your eyes! Look at the Hi-Ken of the Takegami, Muneshige! good bye!"*

Yoshihiro on the horseback is brandishing her Odachi in Tonbo no Kamae and holding off Shoun's sword with only footwork. If she use Jigen-ryu Shoken Goroshi to Takahashi Shoun, she may probably be able to bisect Takahashi Shoun into two. However, that swordmanship were observed by Tachibana Muneshige. *"Yoshihiro-Nee!"* Iehisa supported her with Tanegashima but she cannot comprehend Shoun's Zan-Dan through the handling of his sword. In any case, its impossible for even Yoshihiro to cut down two Shura at the same time. If she cut one of them, the swordmanship of Jigen-ryu will be seen through and her life will be cut down. She has no choice but to cut one of them with Taisha-ryu. But can she cut such a strong man who has already know about her skill with Taisha-ryu? Which one should be cut in order to protect Iehisa and Toshihisa.....Yoshihiro slightly hesitated on which one that she should cut, the father or the daughter. The one on one combat was over. No. Shoun throw away his fame as a Shura to barge in and discard and destroy the manner of one on one battle. After Shimazu Teppo squad that were being led by Iehisa has gathered all at once, *"shoot!"* they aimed at the father daughter duo of Muneshige and Shoun but they were stopped by the sword of Zan-Dan. Because they cannot shot Yoshihiro by mistake, its not possible to shot them without mercy and make their body full of holes.

And, at this time.....

O' Great God of Arms

*"NamuHachiman Daibosatsu, I beseech your aid against my enemy! The last power from this body.....! Give life once more to this leg which has withered completely!"*

On top of the palanquin, he make his palanquin to charge at Yoshihiro while personally releasing Tanegashima. *"charge, charge!"* the "Raijin" Tachibana Dosetsu who keeps on screaming stabbed his own Kodachi next to his paralyzed sword.

Small Sword

Is it willpower? Is it stubbornness?

*"nuoooooooooooooooooh!!! Shoun! Its my duty to become a sacrifice for Muneshige! not yet, half of my body is still alive!"*

Although Tachibana Dosetsu moved half of his body which are paralyzed.....he went down from his palanquin on his own and stood upon the earth.

The Shuras of both side who wield spears and swords in the battlefield, held their breath for an instant.

Shimazu Yoshihiro too was not an exception.

*“.....don’t tell me.....?”*

At this time, Yoshihiro watched the legendary “Raijin” in the figure of Dosetsu who has become a demon and stood in front of her. She was enthralled by the miracle that this old Shura has caused. Its neither an ally nor an enemy anymore.

*“Shimazu Isshin! A person who is distracted by the enemy is a fool!”*

Tachibana Dosetsu’s body, even though he moved for one and two steps, his body greatly shook. His leg which still haven’t recover yet was about to collapse. After Dosetsu stabbed his Kodachi personally to the instep, his body is fixed unto the earth.

*“with this, there is no retreat. Until the remaining half of my body dies, I will not fall down, I will not retreat!”*

Then he draw out “Chidori” that once cut a lightning.

Dosetsu’s body step in for an appropriate opportunity to bisect Yoshihiro on her horseback.

Hizaori Kurige quickly folded its foreleg to let Yoshihiro to stand on the ground. Even this Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro cannot cut this Raijin from horseback. Instead, its disadvantageous. Stood by one’s own leg and swing the sword with full strength. Beside there is no technique that can cut the Raijin who has sever his own path of retreat. Hizaori Kurige who read the ideas that flashed out spontaneously in Yoshihiro’s mind, faithfully carried out that intention.....

Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro stand on her own feet.

With this, both sides are even.....!

*“this will be my last blow in my life. show it. Show your “Satsuma Jigen-ryu”. If you don’t, you will be defeated by me! “Chidori”.....”Raikiri”!”*

...

...

Shimazu Yoshihisa and Shimazu Yoshihiro army have advanced. In the meantime, a clash between Shimazu Yoshihiro and Tachibana Muneshige and her two fathers are about to begin.

Three camps that are deployed on the northern coast of Tanisetogawa, the Otomo 30000 vanguard units will not let Tachibana forces to die a honorable death! And so they started to cross the river all at once.

*“my name were bestowed from one character from Sorin-sama and Dosetsu-dono’s name. Dosetsu-dono we will not let you die! This Kamachi Muneyuki will boldly break Strategist-dono scheme! All forces, cross the river! Scatter Shimazu army! the compensation of violating the martial law is my white haired head!”*

The aged Gishou – Kamachi Muneyuki.

*“my Otouto is too absurd. Following Dosetsu-jiisan with his own child until the last moment.....with an enemy ten times greater than their own, won’t he be annihilated? I cannot stand it any longer. All forces cross the river! Tell it to Kuroda Kanbei, once everything is over we will commit seppuku so just be silent and observe!”*

Takahashi Shoun’s biological Ane – Yoshihiro Shigenobu.

And Kuroda Kanbei’ Vice strategist who moved the 10000 soldiers that she substantially led – Tsunokuma Sekisou.

*“Kuroda Kanbei-dono. Your excellent plan failed when Shimazu army captured Neshirosaka first. Among your plan which is to entrap Tsuru no Buse were also failed when Tachibana Muneshige-dono charge. After Shimazu army gives up their Tsuru*

*no Buse tactic, their whole army cross the river. From now on, I will cross the river with the young soldiers and have a showdown with Shimazu army. according to the "Ki", perhaps Otomo army will be defeated but.....in Otomo army there are still an untouched 20000 bodyguard units that Kanbei-dono arranged. Please, I want Sorin-sama to safely escape from here. I entrust the later measures after this. But the bad plan that you prepared in case that the excellent and medium plan failed, I fear that it would need you to make sacrifices. I hope that you won't ever use it"*

All of them rejected Kanbei's command and moved out.

*"Tachibana Dosetsu is my student. I will deal with this unworthy student who is going to helplessly die while foolishly ignoring Kanbei-dono's solid plan"*

...

...

*"koraa!!! wait!!!! No good, no good, no good!!! We cannot win against Shimazu army with this! A-a-aaaaahhh.....! Both army will be annihilated.....! This plan that Simon has elaborately polished, as expected, failed at one step before it completed.....! Is this Simon's limit?.....uh.....uh....."*

Kanbei who were left behind in her strategist exclusive 2 wheeled vehicle, covered her face.

Konoe Sakihisa who is wearing an iron mask turned to Kanbei's foothold and mutter.

*"Kuroda Kanbei. With this, the medium plan are probably failed too. The elaborately polished plan that you play for all or nothing to save Sagara Yoshiharu and Oda Nobuna.....seemed to end in failure"*

Konoe Sakihisa continued his words.

*"the excellent plan is to capture the important area Neshirosaka earlier that Shimazu army and completely surround Taka castle, making their reserve army to give up and conclude a reconciliation in exchange of lehisa's life. the medium plan which is the last move is to bring sudden and unexpected reconciliation when both*

*sides of the army are glaring to each other by sending Tachibana detachment forces from the west mountain and force out the Tsuru no Buse. none of them has been attained. The last move that you prepared for the medium plan was too late. It was delayed for some reason. Its possibly come to naught. Although I just don't feel like it but.....will you remove my iron mask and use the bad plan?"*

*"of course. I was determined to use it if the plan has failed. The reason why I didn't told about my true intention to the three commanders of the vanguard units and Sagara Yoshiharu who is in Sou camp is because it would be a problem if the execution of the bad plan is disturbed. Let's do it"* Kanebi nodded while having tears in her eyes.

*"yare yare. Kuroda Kanbei. You are consumed by the ambition to conquer Kyushu and the whole country and run out of control. You conspire with the namban Gaspard and betray Oda clan. you arrest the messenger of peace and your former master Sagara Yoshiharu as well as the Kanpaku Konoe Sakihisa and commit all kinds of tyranny.....right? after you told me the truth immediately after you arrest me at Mushiga, I have been stuck to do an extremely long monkey show"* Konoe Sakihisa takes his iron mask by himself while smiling wryly. He stood up as if nothing has happened.

There is neither white pain and black tooth on his face. Its his real face.

*"when I use such kind of mask, thing are getting steamy and I can't apply makeup. Somehow there is an uncomfortable feeling to stand out in the battlefield with my real face. Was it ever since the Kanto expedition with Uesugi Kenshin.....?"*

*"Konoe Sakihisa. Drove this 4 wheeled vehicles and take Simon to the center of the battlefield. And cut my head for the war crime of swindling Otomo Sorin to cause this great war"*

*"I understand. I will take responsibility for the failed foolish plan of incorrigibly seduces Otomo Sorin and brought a peace. Otomo Sorin didn't demand love from a man except Sagara Yoshiharu"*

Konoe Sakihisa started to paint his face with white powder and blacken his tooth.

Abandoning the defense of Tachibanayama and Iwaya castle is virtually presenting Chikuzen to Ryuzoji Takanobu. But Kanbei folded it in the favorite plan which is the medium plan and the tide of war has changed. Kanbei's medium plan should've gone well. The appearance of Otomo detached force to both sides who lack any decisive trump card, should've literally able to bring out a sudden and unexpected reconciliation. If a reconciliation are established immediately, they would've been able to rescue Oda Nobuna and Akechi Mitsuhide from their predicament by commanding Otomo army to make a great return to Honshu from Hyuga and confining the Mori army from the back.

However, the appearance of the detached force that advance through the mountain, was it a coincidence or inevitable that it looks like *"the forest of Hyuga start attacking"*? at that time when Otomo Sorin talked about the prophecy to Sagara Yoshiharu, Kanbei was together with Sagara Yoshihi.

Gaspard bet on such possibility that Sorin would be despaired by the way of salvation called "love" and shoot Yoshiharu by putting together Sorin and Yoshiharu at Mushiga.

Kanbei had to protect Yoshiharu's life from Gaspard. But if she personally guard Sorin's mansion then Yoshiharu himself will realized that she didn't actually betray Oda clan and Yoshiharu. Then trouble would happen once it comes to the time when they have to carry out the bad plan. Therefore, she gave an order to Tachibana Muneshige to guard Sorin's mansion.

As a result.....Tachibana Muneshige was able to know the content of the prophecy while Kanbei wasn't able to know it. That produced a miscalculation as the charge of Tachibana army.

Kanbei's plan was literally a tactic that gambles everything. Kanbei had already done a determination equal to Yamamoto Kansuke who tried to settles the end with Uesugi Kenshin by using woodpecker tactic. Oda Nobuna's and Otomo Sorin's destiny were all carried and fought unto her shoulder as a strategist. But the plan that Kanbei unleashed coincidently happened with the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin.....the future of Sorin's downfall.

Kanbei bet on a surprise move of making a stalemate at the battle of Taka castle in order to accomplish the difficult mission of forming a reconciliation between Otomo Sorin and Shimazu clan. She performed such reckless gambling and was losing on that bet. "Raijin" Tachibana Dosetsu. Takahashi Shoun. "Nishikoku Musou" Tachibana Muneshige who commanded the bodyguard units and protect Sorin. And the three Shura generals who were selected by Kanbei as the commander of the vanguard units in a hurry. Every available pieces has already been cast by Kanbei at the state of war. Now, each one of those pieces are begin to charge without permission. As if it was destined that this reckless charge was totally determined from the beginning.....

(furthermore, the piece that I cast as the last move hasn't return yet. As expected, it was impossible. It wasn't in time. If only there is no Tachibana clan mysterious charge or.....or if didn't use Kunikuzushi to support Tachibana clan. If I abandon Tachibana clan to be annihilated.....no, there is no use in saying that. There is no cases that the plan that a strategist thought in the battlefield would be 100% realized)

Now the only piece left at Kanbei's hand.....Konoe Sakihisa.

Kanbei has rudely treated the Kampaku Konoe who is the messenger of peace from Yamato-Gosho which are equal for being the person closest to head of Shimazu clan. She put an iron mask and a collar to him and dragged him around. In this battlefield he was captured as a hostage and were taken out to the frontline. He was shown in front of Shimazu clan after being packed behind the strategist exclusive 4 wheeled vehicle. A letter was sent to Shimazu army saying *"if you want Konoe Sakihisa to be returned, then accept my demand"*.

It would be nice if either one of Kanbei's excellent or medium plan succeeded. But both the excellent and medium plan has ended in failure and the two sides cannot immediately reconciled. Kanbei voluntarily let herself be tempted by Gaspard and cause this crusade in order to become a "villain" to settle this dispute.

A sacrifice is needed in order to conclude a peace for this great war that has started.



Iehisa who were surrounded at Taka castle was originally would commit seppuku but it would be far more reasonable if she was taken as a hostage by the Otomo clan. Iehisa herself have that kind of resolution when she enter Taka castle. But in that case, it would be impossible to gain peace. The unity of Shimazu 4 sisters is solid. If Iehisa dies, the remaining sisters would never forgive Otomo clan. They would continue fighting until both sides has fallen. And the three Ane would not accept that Iehisa would be taken as the hostage for Otomo clan that easily. It would take 100 days to negotiate. And then there will be no time to rescue Oda Nobuna. Therefore Kanbei continued acting like a villain for the sake of that one moment where she has to execute the bad plan. Otomo clan. Shimazu clan. Nobuna. Sagara Yoshiharu. She carry all of those people's grudge upon her shoulder.

Kanbei didn't believe about her future as a second rate from Gaspard from the very beginning. She doubt the authenticity of Platonic Solid that Gaspard use. Although it's a treasure tool that can show the future, its not the future that Yoshiharu had intervene. There has to be some kind of trick to it. No, even if the Platonic Solid is real, Kanbei's future as a second rate will not come.

The fate are not fixed. The future can be changed. Even if its impossible through the power of a single person, it can be done through the hearts of many peoples.

Kanbei had saw the moment when a person conquer his own destiny many times before. She had often experienced itself.

In Harima.....Takenaka Hanbei who should've died in the middle of attacking Miki castle was able to gain ten years of life.

First of all, Kanbei who had known about Hanbei's destiny, was charging to Ukita Naoie in order to change Hanbei's destiny of her death.

As a result, Kanbei was thrown into underground jail and beckon another fate where her visage and body would crumble at a place without light.

Kanbei's own intellect had made her realize that she had no power in front of such of a huge destiny.

However.....

Sagara Yoshiharu didn't abandon any of Kanbei's and Hanbei's fate. He worked hard until the end without abandoning anything.

Zenki had become a shield to Yoshiharu.

Yoshiharu rescued Kanbei after break through Ukita Naoie's trap.

At the same time, Matsunaga Hisahide who knew about Hanbei's resolution at Kiyomizu-dera worked together with Goemon to obtain Ranja-tai in Todai-ji and rescue Hanbei from the brink of death.

Hanbei and Kanbei.

The destiny of the two people has changed.

(destiny cannot be conquered through the power of one person. However when people's intention, thought and feelings comes together, a miracle would happen. However, miracles cannot happen every time. Regrettably, the people's intention changed little by little and in the end they cannot escape from destiny anymore.....so its now. Tachibana clan have some beautiful intention as well. One that they cannot abandon. Surely it was necessary to keep it a secret. Simon as well. Sagara Yoshiharu. Sagara Yoshihi. Gaspard. It would be troublesome if they are being suspected by Hagakure-Shinobi squad that were being led by Nabeshima Naoshige. Not having any chance to mutually understood each sides intention.....is probably the cause of today's result)

Kanbei learned about the most important things as a strategist from Hanbei who were prepared for death at Yumesakigawa.

At that time, Hanbei entrusted everything to Kanbei and intended to die.

*{Kanbei, a strategist will cloud his wisdom if he didn't keep a clean and calm heart}*

Kanbei keep continue the act of a betrayer while repeatedly pray about Hanbei's words in her mind. She had endured. There was a possibility that she could hide her true feeling until the end even if she was in front of Sagara Yoshiharu. however,

it was still painful. Because it was painful, Kanbei distanced herself from him after putting Yoshiharu a prisoner under Sorin and Muneshige's supervision while in the middle of marching to Taka castle. If she endured the pain of her heart and marched together with Yoshiharu or if they can see through each other intention then a miracle might occurred.

(Sagara corps will lose one of its proud "Two Strategist" here. It would be nice if Sagara Yoshihi who were kept in the jail at Mushiga become successor of Simon who are shut in Shoshazan. I was convinced after I talk to Yoshihi at the jail of Mushiga just the two of us.....as expected, Sagara Yoshihi had a capacity and resourcefulness as a vice general rather than being a strategist. Her passion which love Sagara Yoshiharu as her Otouto was genuine. It would be more than enough to fill the empty hole when Simon leave. She would surely heart the wound of Sagara Yoshiharu's heart due to Simon's death)

*Aah.*

*I wanted to meet Takenaka Hanbei once last time.*

*"could I truly be a true strategist.....like a <sup>Flowing Water</sup> Josui "* Kanbei thought.

(Simon's death is a bit too early but if I thought of it as an exchange for Hanbei's life of ten years then the balance is accepted. The battle between Shimazu and Otomo army will be stopped in exchange of Simon's head. Although Simon will vanish from the earth, if Sagara Yoshiharu survived then Mori army's advancement will certainly be stopped. Hanbei and Oda Nobuna are rescued. I am worried about Gaspard's existence but.....it will be alright. Sagara Yoshiharu would surely gain Sorin's trust. He will heal the wound of Sorin's heart)

*Its strange.*

*For some reason the memory when I was being shut inside the underground jail at Shoshazan have revived.*

At that time Kanbei was suffering from fear.

There is a light in the darkness.

Yoshiharu come to save her.

Yoshiharu hug her.

...

{Yoshiharu. let go off me. Its painful}

{shut up! If I let you go then you will disappear again! I won't let you go anymore!}

{.....I won't go again. I won't disappear like that again}

{then promise me!}

{I won't go. I won't go without saying anything again}

{if you do such selfish things again, I won't forgive you!}

...

*"I break the promise from that time. I am sorry" Kanbei muttered while turning her face down.*

*"Simon is.....would Sagara Yoshiharu believe a traitor? Would he seriously abandon me? He would be injured if that he left any feeling for Simon....."*

*"his feeling will remain. Your death will hurt Sagara Yoshiharu. no matter how much you did such monkey show, that person doesn't hate you. but Sagara Yoshiharu's will to rescue Oda Nobuna has been accomplished"*

*"fufu. I guess so Konoe"*

*"a pain will only last a moment Kuroda Kanbei. If you are a man, then die graciously. If this Kampaku Konoe Sakihisa cut your head as a war crime then you would unexpectedly stopped these two army dispute. However, if it turn to be a fierce battle like this then the probability that the bad plan succeed if only 30%.....its hardly 100%. This is why its called as a bad plan"*

*"wait a minute. Simon is a girl"*

*“.....eh?!”*

*“you are a girl??!! Is that true? You want a Kampaku to cut a girl?! What one earth are you suddenly saying? If you are a girl in the first place then why didn’t you comprehend my beauty?!!”* Konoe was confused. *“.....Simon don’t remember that I was dressed like a man but.....I am still a kid. Fu fu I already don’t feel any misery anymore. If I was a boy then you might be able to kill me without regret. It’s a death sutiable for a second rate strategist.....gusun”* Kanbei *“well, lets go Konoe Sakihisa”* let him to take her strategist exclusive 4 wheeled car to the riverside.

The mask is removed. When Konoe Sakihisa who had applied his white painted make up and dyed his tooth black moved the 4 wheeled vehicles, the Shimazu army wasn’t able to attack the 4 wheeled vehicle where the strategist of Otomo clan sit upon. Even though Shimazu army lives in Sengoku era but they still respect and worship Konoe clan which is close to their own clan head.

Of course the soldiers of Otomo army cannot interfere with the sudden strange behavior of the strategist who personally moved to the frontline.

Anyone who blocked Kanbei’s advance has left.

No one block her path.

*“Simon’s plan.....as always, only when the moment is like this that it goes on smoothly”* Kanbei thought.

Kuroda Kanbei arrived at the frontline of Kawahara sandbank by using her strategist exclusive 4 wheeled vehicle to cross the river.

When Konoe Sakihisa asked *“are you ready?”* from Kanbei’s back, she nodded.....

A voice that halted Kanbei was resounded.

It was a nostalgic voice.

It was similar to that time.....it was the same voice as that time when Kanbei was rescued from being imprisoned at the underground jail at Shoshazan.

*“ooi wait Kanbei! Didn’t I told you at that time that I won’t forgive you if you did such things again??!!”*

Kanbei thought it was a hallucination to her ear.

*“don’t look back, if I look back the life of that important person will be lost”* Kanbei suppressed her desire to turn her head back. She suppressed it desperately.

However her waist was caught from behind and she was made to turn around against her will.....

*“don’t do such evil things and die selfishly! Don’t break your promise from that time!”*

*Sagara Yoshiharu.*

*Why did he come?*

*“even if Otomo clan is stopped by your head, the Shimazu clan who are not your acquaintance will not stop. If you brought Gaspard’s head who is the ringleader that incited Sorin to attack Hyuga then Shimazu force would stop. But Gaspard has already anticipate your plan and separates himself with Sorin to Takachiho. Only my head that you can use”*

*“you idiot!”* Kanbei was hitting Yoshiharu’s chest.

*“why are you here?!! I left you and Yoshihi to Sorin so why??!”*

*“Yoshihi-Neesan is with Sorin. Yoshihi-Neesan would definitely protect Sorin until the end. Therefore, I was able to come to you. There is a significant reason when the two “Sagara Yoshiharu” encounter each other”*

※

Half an hour before.

At the time when Kanbei begun moved her vehicle to execute her bad plan.

At Sou camp of Otomo army.....after receiving a blow from Muneshige and knocked down, Sagara Yoshiharu who had finally stood up and thought over the last words that Muneshige leave while staring at the battlefield with his own eyes, he finally understood.

The bad plan that Kuroda Kanbei had prepared is to make herself a war criminal and let Konoe cut her head. Its literally a bad plan to forcibly stop the battle.

Therefore all of this time she was performing a play of “deceiving Gaspard by becoming an Akukan, betrayed the Oda clan and openly reveal her ambition to unify Kyushu and stole the world”.

Tachibana clan try to die a noble death at Hyuga to overturn the prophecy.

Muneshige who is aware of her unnatural fate after incidentally know the prophecy during the night at Mushiga, nevertheless went towards death to save Sorin from the prophecy.

Muneshige choose to accomplish Dosetsu andShoun’s earnest wish and that is to save Sorin from being bound and suffer by the prophecy.

If they can penetrate and rout Shimazu army which has charged into Kawahara sandbank and if Otomo clan could win miraculously, at that same moment Muneshige can accomplish her mission to die at Takigawa and liberates Sorin from her endless cycle of killing her Otouto. The decline of Otomo clan could be prevented.

But its useless.

Because there is Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro in Shimazu army.

And Muneshige’s unbreakable and unbending Meito – Ken Nagamitsu are being stabbed to the earth inside Sou camp.

When Muneshige turned to her death, she handed it over to her wife Ginchiyo.

(its useless. Muneshige. its useless! No matter what kind of technique, no matter how much fighting spirit you have, if its comes to a battle between the strongest, the quality of your armament will decide the outcome of the battle! Even though you are called the “Nishikoku Musou”, you cannot block Yoshihiro’s one sure hit killer move without using Ken-Nagamitsu!)

Kanbei has already started to execute the bad plan without waiting the last move of the medium plan. The evidence is that Konoe who had removed his mask has carry Kanbei in her 4 wheeled vehicle to cross the river. Yoshiharu was able to understand the meaning of Kanbei’s action. Both sides have begun an all-out war. If they decided to keep waiting for the last move any further then Tachibana clan and then Shimazu sisters will die in battle. If its like that then the last move will be useless. Both sides has no choice but to keep on fighting desperately until they are destroyed. Everything has become too late.

There shouldn’t be any hatred between Otomo and Shimazu clan. There is no necessity for them to do such extermination war. so why does it become like this? Just because each people’s fate slightly crossed with other at the same time, they all charged ahead to a tragic ending.

Yoshiharu whose injury still hasn’t recovered yet coughed “\*cough\*cough” while talking to Yoshihi.

*“Yoshihi-Neesan. Kanbei will die! Muneshige will also die! I have to stop Kanbei!”*

He shouted in a voice like a scream.

He quickly told the content of the prophecy to Yoshihi.

With that alone, the wise Yoshihi immediately understood everything.

*“is that so? To have become like that sort of situation. In case that I entered Mushiga, I have to be arrested and kept away from Sorin”*

*“it can’t be helped. Kanbei was cautious of Yoshihi-Neesan who hold deeper familial love than anyone. If she let Yoshihi-Neesan to get in contact with Sorin, Sorin would change her minds and Kanbei’s strategy will be greatly thrown out of order”*



*“but Kanbei transferred me into Sou camp! Kanbei entrusted a little bit of hope to me. I know that person’s true intention!”*

*“it might like that too.....if she take Yoshihi-Neesan to the frontline, you might get involved and killed in battle. In case that she died, she wanted to leave Yoshihi-Neesan under me”*

*“hpmh. It’s a skillful act of betrayal. I am much better than Kanbei when it comes to posing as a villain. Should I go to Kanbei to stop her Yoshiharu?”*

*“even though I stop Yoshihi-Neesan, didn’t you still went towards Hibikinohara?”*

*“.....chi. You can’t talk back to me”*

*In reality Yoshiharu want to stay a little bit with Sorin “.....Muneshige. Dosetsu. Shoun. This. This is. If I weren’t bound by the prophecy.....I wouldn’t let Tachibana clan to die in such worst way” who is stricken with guilt and sorrow. I might be the logic for Sorin in Mushiga. What Sorin requested is not logic but repentance. But fortunately, Yoshihi is in this Sou camp.*

That time.

Sorin who sat down in a namban chair without being able to stand due to fear and sorrow, desperately caught Yoshiharu’s hand who was going to leave Sou camp.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. are you leaving as well? leaving Sorin in such a cruel world.....”*

*“there are cruel things in the world but it wasn’t always like that Sorin. There are beautiful things too. Even if you found the evidence that the bad prophecy were proven right, in reality it was just an illusion. You yourself are only interpreting the word of the prophecy which has been accomplished right in front of your eyes. Don’t be tied with a word. If you want to believe in other people’s word then believe in the words of the person who say that he/she want to save you and not in the words of the old women who cursed you”*

*“.....Sagara Yoshiharu. are you also a person who wished to save me?”*

*“of course. You aren’t a slave to fate. You can choose the words and faith that will lead you by your own will. I didn’t become your lover in Mushiga but I didn’t deny you. I don’t think that you are inferior than Nobuna”*

*“really? Now and then, I am always being compared to Oda Nobuna by Xavier-sama and Gaspard-sama”*

*“its true. You aren’t alone. Tachibana Dosetsu, Takahashi Shoun and Muneshige are also here for you. And there is a lot of retainers who are going to die and fight so that you will live. I haven’t met them but I understand. Dosetsu didn’t regret about being struck by thunder and paralyzed to rescue you. But still, half of body survived. its possible for him to offer of his healthy body to you. I think that Dosetsu is glad that he has miraculously survived. Therefore, he has been worked out this plan to break the prophecy with the remaining half of his body. A prophecy is not about what it is. I merely want you to believe in Dosetsu. How long do you think that they were thinking about you?”*

*“but Shiootomaru has died. Sorin’s Otouto, everybody surely bear a grudge against Sorin”*

*“none of your Otouto bear a grudge against you and blame you. Muneshige as well. Yoshihi-Neesan kept treating Tokuchiyo coldly all the time to follow her grandfather’s will. She kept her away. Tokuchiyo was thrown deep inside the mountain for many years. But Tokuchiyo didn’t bear a grudge against Yoshihi-Neesan and hate her. This is because Yoshihi-Neesan’s real intention has been transmitted to Tokuchiyo. Because you have lost your Otouto, you keep on suffering until this much. Compared to Yoshihi-Neesan who has been separated from Tokuchiyo, you have suffered all the time for having lost all of your Otouto by death. Shioichimaru. Shiootomaru. Ouchi Teruhiro. Otomo Chikasada. Everyone, no one bears a grudge against you”*

*“.....really.....?”*

*“among the people you know, the person who is blaming you for not being able to protect your Otouto. Is you Sorin”*

*“.....its cruel you know.....saying such gentle words.....enough.....”*

It was a defenseless tearful face, as if her mask has peeled off.

For the first time Yoshiharu see the real true face of Sorin.

However, Sorin quietly let go Yoshiharu's hand while sobbing. She doesn't restrained him any longer. Time is about to run out.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. I probably have felt this feeling. There nothing like this. Because right now you will...”*

*“you can cry after this battle ends. Sorin. I am sorry. I have to go”*

There is no more moment to be delayed too. Yoshiharu jumped to a horse and took off.

Ginchiyo who is crying is clapping Yoshiharu's back while clinging to the weeping Sorin.

And Yoshihi who entrusted to Sorin by Yoshiharu, muttered while being next to Sorin who cover her face on the chair.

*“.....mattaku.....I am dumbfounded you stupid Otouto. Sagara Yoshiharu. You are my.....”*

Yoshiharu could only hear until that much.

※

From a few moments ago, Yoshiharu's consciousness returned to reality.

If only Kanbei's real intention were noticed much earlier. Such as why Kanbei had seriously running wild and tricked him. If only Sorin's request were noticed earlier. Sorin wasn't asking for logic. She didn't ask for a one night love. Sorin is merely.....wanted to be forgiven by someone. As for why Sorin who couldn't

believe the existence of a god was attracted to Christianity was simply because she want to be forgiven.

(just like what Yoshihi-Neesan said, I am a complete idiot) Yoshiharu “pop” hit Kanbei’s head whom he held firmly in his arm while smiling bitterly.

*“I will say this again Kanbei. Use my head to make the bad plan succeed”*

*“why did you.....noticed that Simon wasn’t manipulated by Gaspard to attack Hyuga.....to separate the troublesome Gaspard from Sorin and gather both army at Taka castle for the preparation of reconciliation for both army.....even though you are thickheaded! Even though you are an idiot! Why is it that only at this time!”*

*“if I think about it now, the fact that you stopped the soldier girl who were about to kill me in Mushiga, the fact that you assign Muneshige to watch me and Sorin all night, the fact that you stationed me at Sou camp which is the safest place in the battlefield, I could understand that everything was actually meant to protect me. But I just noticed the real nature of the bad plan just a moment ago. The clear-headed Muneshige has completely takes the initiatives”*

*“why on earth did Muneshige suddenly leave Sou camp and charge?”*

*“Muneshige intent to defeat Shimazu army and break the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin in exchange of her life. Although I noticed that Muneshie were determined about something, I didn’t know what she was doing. The reason why Tachibana clan begun a death assault is because they want to overturn the prophecy of Sorin’s downfall that were given by the old women who call themselves as the envoy of Usa Hachiman-jin. I was forbidden to tell anybody by Sorin if I want to tell the content of the prophecy to you. because there wasn’t any chance for me to talk to you after being captured at Mushiga”*

*“the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin?!”*

Yoshiharu summarized and informed Kanbei about the prophecy.

*“damn it! So that’s how it is! Tachibana clan did the same thing like Simon who rushed to Ukita Naoie to save Hanbei’s fate!”* Kanbei gnashed her teeth.

Meanwhile, the strategist vehicle carry Kanbei, Yoshiharu and Konoe is charging in full throttle towards the center of Kawahara sandbank in front of Taka castle.

*“was Simon’s performance clumsy? Because I managed to deceived Sagara Yoshiharu, I thought that I should’ve been able to deceive Gaspard but Gaspard probably have noticed it too. The reason why Gaspard readily entrusted the command for the detached forces to Dosetsu.....wasn’t because Gaspard has fallen to Simon’s plan but.....probably because Gaspard who know about the prophecy has predicted that Tachibana clan would try to overturn the prophecy by doing suicide attack and die.....”* Kanbei who sat upon the throne groaned, *“sorry Kanbei. I didn’t take the meaning of the prophecy “when the forest of Hyuga began to attack, Sorin will perish” seriously. For a man from the future, an oracle or prophecy are just a superstition. I wasn’t able to understand the impact and influence of a prophecy to people from Sengoku era. I wasn’t able to notice the reason why Muneshige was so confused, angry and grieved when she understood the prophecy. I should’ve learned a lesson from Honbyo temple about how much power of a prophecy to the human’s heart of this era.....you should’ve be able to configure a perfect plan if the information of the prophecy is transmitted to you through Tarot cards”* Yoshiharu apologizes while standing at Kanbei’s left side.

The origin of Honbyo temple decision to fight Oda clan was because there was a prophecy that “Osaka Honbyo temple will be destroyed in flames”.

At Kanbei’s right side, Konoe Sakihisa who has finished done his white painted makeup and dyed his teeth black, stand up. The 4 wheeled vehicle which was protected by a robust Shura have crossed over Tanisetogawa and finished running over to the frontline of Kawahara sandbank where both Otomo and Shimazu army clashed.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu. we are now going to execute the bad plan de-ojaru. Kuorda Kanbei who is being tempted by Gaspard have raised Otomo Sorin to arbitrarily start this battle of Taka castle and ignore Himiko-sama’s imperial decree to reconciled Otomo and Shimazu army and saves Oda Nobuna. And Maro who is the Kampaku and being imprisoned by Kuroda Kanbei, after descended right into the middle of the battlefield will personally execute Kuroda Kanbei as a prove for the*

*reconciliation for both army.....this is the bad plan that Kuroda Kanbei prepared incase that excellent and medium plan failed de-ojaru. The reason why Kuroda Kanbei seriously playing like a villain all this time was for this moment de-ojaru”*

*“Konoe-jiisan. Unless its the head of the mastermind Gaspard who tempted Sorin to founded the Christian kingdom, Shimazu army which has entered to a fight will not stop. Even if you execute Kanbei, there won’t be any impact enough to stop Shimazu army who is in rage. But there is an exception. My head. For Iehisa who has become a Shura, Toshihisa, Yoshihiro and Yoshihisa as well.....if you execute me who is “The man from the future who planned to plunder the world of Japan” and fell my head on the battlefield, then they would come to their senses. They wouldn’t be able to believe that made up story that I was having such ambition, right? My once in a lifetime selfishness would surely be accepted”*

*“the death of the present Genji. It’s a heartless poor plan that would left a wound in the heart of Shimazu 4 sisters de-ojaru. Look, the Tachibana clan and Shimazu sister have already engaged in direct battle de-ojaru. If we let them to fight any longer, perhaps people will keep on dying one after another. That is the only way to stop it de-ojaru”*

*“wait! You two, don’t do such a selfish things!”*

Kanbei stand up from the throne and clung to Yoshiharu’s neck.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu! if you die here, Hanbei will cry! moreover, why do you need to commit seppuku for Simon’s failure.....?”*

*“I cannot commit seppuku. I wasn’t born as a samurai. Because this going to cause quite a pain, I want you to fell my head”*

*“it’s a figure of speech! Don’t go even though you said such fraud!”*

At last, Kanbei begun to weep. *“its not the strategist Kanbei if you cry”* Yoshiharu whispered.

*“Kanbei. You are the strategist who is in command. Isn’t there some duty left for you? even if Konoe-jiisan has forcibly bring an imperial decree to bring truce for bot*

*army, if you are missing, who will command Otomo army to bring a great counter strike to Mori clan? only you who can do it. That's why, mead head need to be cut"*

*".....you mustn't die. You cannot die. Why do you see through Simon's fake betrayal. As what Gaspard has said, when a great decisive have begun in Honshu, Simon should've destined to act violently in the midst of confusion at Kyushu! Even you know about it! That's why, if I become an Akukan who schemed to conquer Kyushu.....then Gaspard and you, I thought that you would notice that I keep on deceiving you until the end....."*

*"wasn't it painful to act like a villain Kanbei? You are always like that, voluntarily get a bad end of a bargain and got misunderstood as a person. Its your nature. You are a very good natured person. If I truly take your betrayal seriously forever, wouldn't it become a problem for the strategist? Do you really think I would seriously abandon you the "betrayal"? you who charged alone to Ukita Naoie to change Hanbei's fate?"*

*".....in the end.....Sagara Yoshiharu. Simon wasn't able to repay that favor of being saved by you at that time.....on the contrary"*

*"don't say such reserved things. What favor. There is no such troublesome things like that between me and you. I as for a miraculous great counter strike from Otomo army Kanbei. There is no time for delay anymore. Please stop the advance of Mori's raging billows. Its possible to a big reversal if "Nishikoku Musou" Tachibana Muneshige survived. You can do it. Kuroda Kanbei. You are the best strategist on the world. I am begging you"*

*".....your loose teeth.....stop that.....Sagara Yoshiharu. you are....."*

*"this is not a last will. Not yet, the last move that you prepared to make the medium plan succeed has yet to be finished. Maybe it was just being delayed. During the blank moment at the battlefield when Konoe felled my head.....it might arrive just barely in time. There is a little possibility that I would survive. So don't give up until the end"*

*“but even the time is out. It isn’t your fault. At any rate, my life are destined to be used somewhere for the sake of Nobuna’s Tenka Fubu. Its only a coincidence that the time is now. its not your fault” Yoshiharu whispered while patting Kanbei’s back who cannot stop crying.*

*“hey Kanbei. Your back has grown”*

*“.....shut up.....don’t say gentle things anymore. It will be in time. It surely will be in time. Sagara Yoshiharu. until now, things never gone well until the end.....although without Hanbei, nothing can be fulfilled.....please believe in Simon’s resourcefulness”*

*“aah. I understand. I believe you. then lets begin”*

*“right there de-ojaru! We have carried out the vehicles to the distance where we can hear Tachibana clan and Shimazu Yoshihiro de-ojaru! We must carried out the bad plan now! Shimazu Yoshihiro and Tachibana Dosetsu, the distance between the two of them would bring certain death for both de-ojaru!” Konoe Sakihisa yell while pulling out his sword to sweep away arrows that pout like a storm. “his voice would become elegant once he removes his makeup. Why does his voices turned inside out when painting his face white?” Yoshiharu wondered.*

*“wait! The Shura generals of both army, stop the battle for a while de-ojaru! Maro is the envoy of Himiko-sama that were sent from Yamato Gosho! The Kampaku and the head of Fujiwara clan Konoe Sakihisa de-ojaru! Sagara Yoshiharu conspired to become a Kampaku himself to steal japan and aim to become Maro’s adopted son while being a vagrant from the future, he also interfere the reconciliation of both clans! This man, while he installed the princess of Owari Oda Nobuna to the seat of the ruler of the world and achieve an exceptional success in life, once his name is well known around the world, he deemed Oda Nobuna as unnecessary and boarded to Kyushu. He is a true villain who entices Shimazu 4 sisters and Otomo Sorin to raise a great war! he took a chance when Honshu was in disorder to become independent in Kyushu. He arrested Maro and build a new country as a Kampaku for himself. He is trying to reproduce “Emperor Jimmu Eastern Conquest” by advancing from Hyuga to Kinai and rule japan for himself! Even the namban Gaspard who occupied*



*Takachiho where the grandson of the sun goddess descend upon the earth, are just a chess piece that were manipulated by this man from the future de-ojaru! everything has been investigated by Kuroda Kanbei! Maro will personally behead this man to protect Himiko-sama and dictates reconciliation for bot army de-ojaru!"*

*"ah. It was not in time. It doesn't come. The person I am waiting come doesn't come"* Kuroda Kanbei was still waiting for the last move that would possibly end in failure while praying. Don Simon who is waiting for a miracle while hugging Yoshiharu's body have lost the amount of time she has at last. The severed head of Sagara Yoshiharu will confuse bot army. this is the last resort to extend the time limit. There is nothing left for Kanbei anymore.

*"goodbye de-ojaru, Sagara Yoshiharu. the man from the future who might become my son"*

Sagara Yoshiharu step down on his knees and lower his head. He is going to receive "that moment" from under Konoe Sakihisa's feet.

Ever since he came to Kyushu, he always has this vague feeling *"I might die Kyushu without being able to meet Nobuna again"*. It was a continuous danger ever since he was drifted to Yatsushiro. Being suddenly attacked by Kai Soun at Hitoyoshi castle. Having a fierce battle with Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro at Kizakihara. The decision of decapitation without hesitation by Yoshihiro who didn't believe in future and fate. Gaspard's plot of sneaking around in two and three group to surround and corner Yoshiharu. A risk of being extinct from the fact that "I didn't born from the beginning". Hibikonahara. A night with Sorin in Mushiga. it was a miracle that he could live until now. its possible that all of it is for this one moment.

Iehisa, Toshihisa, Yoshihiro, Yoshihisa. All of Shimazu 4 sisters stop their hands all at once and staring at Yoshiharu who is kicked by Konoe on the 4 wheeled car and is going to have his neck cut. The Shuras who has seen his face from the opening of Amano-Iwato. Tachibana Dosetsu. Takahashi Shoun. And Tachibana Muneshige. everyone has spoken something. A shout.

At this moment. They have forgot the battle in front of their eyes.

*“the bad plan.....has succeeded” Yoshiharu thought.*

※

At the same time at Takachiho.....

*“Don Simon who was already deceived by the word of my future foresight possibly intent to fight this battle in order to change her destiny as a strategist but.....as expected, I has been successfully deceived by that young strategist of Zipangu”*

The Christians soldier who were sent towards the ground of Shinto shrine, *“there should be a <sup>Ten Sacred Treasure</sup> Jusshushinpo that are comparable to the 3 Imperial Regalia or a treasure tool that surpass them sleeping inside Takachiho”*. Gaspard continued his investigation while smiling to Frois who patiently observed him to prevent him to burn down Buddhist temple and Shinto shrine under the pretense of an investigation.

*“it doesn’t seem that Otomo Sorin-sama have killed Sagara Yoshiharu at Mushiga. Sagara Yoshiharu reject the courtship from Sorin-sama’s seduction and then my prediction that Sorin-sama would despair from that bargain seemed to have missed. After Don Simon found out about my plan, she seemed to have taken some measures. But Sagara Yoshiharu who rejected Sorin-sama’s courtship, weren’t able to stop Otomo army advancement. Because Don Simon didn’t predict that Tachibana clan have prepared an honorable suicide attack to overturn the prophecy, the battlefield of Taka castle should’ve become a fierce battle right now. A sacrifice is necessary in order to forcibly stop the battle between Otomo and Shimazu army. if its becomes like that, Don Simon intent to voluntarily take that role but.....Don Simon bear little relationship with Shimazu clan. Sagara Yoshiharu will, by his own volition, thought it will be a suitable time to cut his neck. The truth is, I don’t have any intent to kill or carrying out a plan to killing him.....I took troubles at spending some time so that he will pass away without me killing him. But, it would be fine if he return to the future. although I didn’t want to take his life, it*

*can't be helped. Sagara Yoshiharu will fall down at last and at that time I will visit and become Oda Nobuna-sama's new strategist"*

*"enough.....isn't there a person who will save Yoshiharu-san"* Frois asked Gaspard while glaring at him.

*"there is only one chance that he might survive. For the last move that Don Simon prepared to settle the battlefield, they will gain time until the person who will change the state of war appears. The last move that Don Simon prepared is absolutely powerful. It has the power to entirely overturn all of the pieces on board. But her strategy is too large scaled, if some point are delayed then inconsistency would appeared. Her calculation is late for several hours. Time is up"*

*"but then.....if there is someone who could produce several hours in the battlefield....."*

*"no Frois. The whole Otomo and Shimazu army have clashed at Taka castle at this time. There is no person remaining who can retain the military power"*

Frois who heard Gaspard's victory speech *"ha?!"* opened her eyes wide.

*"no! there is one person! A person who create a miracle!"*

*".....that is, who will?"*

*"there are still some in Otomo clan.....the supreme commander Otomo-sama!"*

*"ooh? Sorin-sama you say?"*

*"that's right! If she personally led 20000 bodyguard units to descend from the hill to the battlefield.....when the uninjured 20000 soldiers moves then the situation at the battlefield will be changed in one go. Shimazu arm need to rearrange their formation in order to stop 20000 soldiers that are outside of their expectation. Then Simon-san and Yoshiharu-san would obtain some time even if just a little"*

However, Gaspard shook his head and denied this miracle. *"Sorin-sama is probably a person who never personally fight in the battlefield until now. Unfortunately, she didn't have any courage.....families, retainers and her own self, since she cannot*

*believe in any of those, Sorin-sama cannot move. Therefore the battle of Taka castle can only stop in exchange of the head of "the mastermind who intent to deceive and surround both armies and capture Kyushu" – Sagara Yoshiharu. If I were to be in the battlefield of Taka castle, then my head would be more effective"*

*"Gaspard-sama. After you have calculated it until that extend, you pretend to lead the detached force and leave the frontline and then you easily handed over the military authority of the detached forces, right? Tachibana clan found out that they need to sink in Takigawa in order to overturn the prophecy. You knew the whole content of the prophecy. Did you use a technique of observation? I don't know whether you have used other kinds of methods, but anyway about the prophecy of Otomo clan to Tachibana clan, you.....you knew that in reality, Dosetsu-sama and Joun-sama knew about the prophecy"*

*"yes. After Sagara Yoshiharu who is the biggest obstacle of changing Nobuna-sama disappeared, both army will cease their fighting and reconciliation will be achieved and Don Simon will do a great counter attack and swiftly advances to Mori's territories to achieve Sagara Yoshiharu's last will. Thus my goal to save Nobuna-sama who is cornered at Honshu will be achieved. But its not a lie that I am looking for a treasure tool in Zipang at Takachiho, Frois"*

*"Gaspard-sama. You are sharp minded man yet similar to a devil. Your eyes aren't clouded by feelings. You are a perfect observer" but that's why Frois answered back.*

*"you cannot understand the power of a human's feeling. Otomo-sama is looking at the state of everyone from Tachibana clan who laid down their life on after another to overturn the prophecy from the top of the hill.....Otomo-sama who is looking at Yoshiharu-san's back who is heading toward the battlefield to die in order to prevent bloodshed between Shimazu and Otomo army, even if his love towards Nobuna-sama would end at thus Kyushu.....Sorin-sama is.....fighting against her own fate. She takes up her sword and descend to the battlefield.....not to protect her own life but to protect the people who is impossible to escape their fate of death. Even if she cannot believe in god. Even if she cannot believe in buddha. Even if she cannot believe in her own self. And yet, she still can have a courage to fight against her own fate. Her confused heart are now shaken. The queen of Kyushu who*

*is cursed by the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin and laid dormant for a long time, have awakened at this moment. Tachibana clan. Yoshiharu-san. And Simon-san have awaken her. You who had live all alone in this world who have neither friends nor a comrade, cannot understand it. That is..."*

*"the power of a human's feelings"* Frois declared.

※

Sorin's Sou camp.

Sagara Yoshihi was speechless. Tachibana Muneshige and Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun have clashed with Shimazu army at Kawahara sandback in front of Taka castle. Both armies' tactic – "Tsuru no Buse" and "Tsuru no Buse – Gaeshi" have collapsed. A direct extermination war between 30000 Otomo army against the whole Shimazu army. and Konoe Sakihisa who marched to the battlefield with a 4 wheeled vehicle, declared to behead the neck of "the war criminal who entices both army to fight and usurp Kyushu" Sagara Yoshiharu.....

*"Yoshiharu. I have told you not to make a determination to easily throw away your life at Kyushu. Yet again, his own life. how is it under any circumstances do you intent to stop the battle between the two army? its no good! It didn't come. Even if you could gain some time from Konoe's declaration to behead you but the person you are waiting for doesn't come. Time has run out you idiot! Bodyguard units! Leave Sou camp at the hill and descend to the battlefield immediately! There is no other choice but to overcome this situation with 20000 soldiers to save Yoshiharu!"*

Even though Yoshihi shouted on a horseback, the bodyguards of Lily Crusade didn't move. No, it cannot move.

*"we are sorry! Tachibana Muneshige-sama is our commander"*

*"the bodyguard units are meant to retreat. It never move....."*

*"Muneshige-sama preserve this 20000 soldiers until the moment when the prophecy has been accomplished"*

*"after that she thought about evacuating the lord safely....."*

*"but Muneshige anticipated that Yoshiharu would let Konoe to cut his head.....she anticipated this conclusion and personally choose a honorable death! If you and the other are the bodyguards then you will carry out Muneshige's will as well!"*

*".....that is"*

*"that's right! But only the lord who can overturn Muneshige-sama's order"*

*"damn.....Yoshiharu. why didn't you rely on me.....?"*

Yoshihi who is just an envoy of peace from Shimazu clan has no authority to lead bodyguard units.

Otomo Sorin who looked pale and tremble grasped Yoshihi's hand muttered while sitting down on a chair.

*".....Yoshihi. the reason why Sagara Yoshiharu appoint you and going out alone is surely.....because he want to prevent you to become a victim. If its you, rather than having Sagara Yoshiharu defeated, instead of that you who is the Ane will choose death hesitation, right? He wished to protect his Ane as an Otouto"*

At this time, Yoshihi understand it from the bottom of her heart.

Otomo Sorin have lived with a despair of letting her Otouto died engraved to her heart for many years.

*"Sorin. I cannot endure that. I have just been separated from my Imouto. Its painful to keep acting like I was avoiding and hating my Imouto. For myself getting ready to escape the battlefield while watching my Otouto die in front of my eyes. I cannot endure that. I cannot endure this pain of my heart that will linger all the time until I die. Sorin. Have you tasted such feeling many times? All the time since "Nikaikuzurenohen".....for even all days, were you not able to escape from this suffering?"*

Sorin didn't answer. She can only cry.

*".....Sorin. If the bodyguard units doesn't move, I will go to Yoshiharu. I have yet to done anything for Yoshiharu. if anything.....for what reason did I survived Hibikinohara? Is it probably because I could let Yoshiharu die in here? That's not a joke. I won't let anyone kill him. Nobody. For whatever reason there will be. No matter what Yoshiharu will say. I will stab Konoe Sakihisa to death and protect Yoshiharu. I will do it for that idiot Otouto"*

*".....its too late.....you cannot save him anymore. You are not in time Yoshihi.....you are a prisoner of Otomo army. nothing will be accomplished even if you go to the battlefield alone. You will die for nothing. You cannot reach Sagara Yoshiharu"*

*"its not, Sorin. Its not about what you have done. But its what you are trying to do, that is important. The Otoutos who died for you should've the same thought as mine. I in my heart. Have decided to live and die true to my feelings. I won't run away anymore. I won't hesitate at all"*

Yoshihi was going to the battlefield alone in a horseback.

*"I am not abusing you. I won't force you to do it. Because a person who survived are much harsher than a dying person. You have suffered several time more than me, but in order to not make your Otouto's death meaningless, you keep on living strenuously. But you know Sorin. If you stand up then you can run. To rescue your Otouto. There is no need for you to keep punishing yourself for not being able to protect your Otouto or for keeping losing your Otouto repeatedly. Its already alright Sorin. And right now, you can end the cycle of "Otouto-Goroshi" by your own will. Because Tachibana clan have given you a last chance....."*

Sorin wasn't able to look at Yoshihi's radiant back anymore.

An Otouto who will die without hesitation for the sake of his Ane.

An Ane who will commit a great sin of killing a Kampaku for the sake of protecting an Otouto.

Why couldn't she be a strong Ane like Yoshihi? She regretted her own cowardice.

Just like Kai Soun has protected Yoshihi, she has also been supported by Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun.

She mustn't let them die.

Sagara Yoshiharu, Dosetsu and Shoun cannot let Muneshige to die for such foolish reason.

The prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin are just a plot from the enemy to curse the Otomo clan.

Its not a word of god.

“Nikaikuzurenohen” and the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin is a plot to intensify the feud of succession of Otomo clan and to make them disintegrate in midair. The old women who appeared are probably someone from the retainers group and not the enemy nation. In Otomo clan of those days, the faction that recommend to Sorin and faction that disinherit Sorin, have fought intensely in secret. Tachibana Dosetsu stood aloof without being concerned about the faction's dispute, because he is angry and understood that his loyalty to Otomo clan will be polluted if he takes sides. And Dosetsu have regretted it all the time. By repenting and offering his life completely to the clan, he will save Sorin from the prophecy.

Its ridiculous.

Because a prophecy are just an ordinary words.

It was only a coincidence that such mere words seems to be accomplished.

Ouchi Teruhiro who were sent to Suo in order to disturb Mori own country weren't made as an Otouto so that he will be protected from the prophecy and yet he was killed in battle.

In the world of Sengoku era. If a samurai fight and lose a war, he will die. But it was only it. It has no relation with the prophecy.

Such reason has been understood from the beginning.



Yet, her heart was frightened by the prophecy all the time.

She couldn't forgive it.

Sorin couldn't forgive her own weakness.

However, what she should truly hate is.....

*“.....if I am the one who is cursed, then it is fine. Because I am the legitimate child of Otomo clan. yet why is my innocent Otouto were cursed.....!?”*

Her Otouto was involved and the word of the three old women who assumed the name of Usa Hachiman-jin have involved Tachibana Muneshige as well. she couldn't forgive that prophecy.

The guilty conscience that keep on tormenting Sorin.....begun to change to anger towards the old women.

And Sorin saw.

At the battlefield under her own eyes.....the sight of Tachibana Dosetsu's figure who continued to keep on standing on the earth, crumbled with a sword stabbed upon the earth in place for his paralyzed leg.

...

...

The Kampaku Konoe Sakihisa suddenly appeared in the frontline of the battlefield and declared the decapitation of Sagara Yoshiharu's head.

The “Raijin” Tachibana Dosetsu who barely stand with his hemiplegic body by releasing Chidori and stabbed it upon the ground in place of his one leg.

In front of Dosetsu, the Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro who got down from Hizaoiri Kurige and steeped upon the distance of certain death have lifted a chance of victory.

Each of them readied their sword and kept on glaring at their opponent to obtain a chance of instant victory.

Konoe's words with his peculiar noble court tone reached their ears at the same time.

The war criminal who incited both Otomo and Shimazu army and plotted to takeover Kyushu.

Sagara Yoshiharu's decapitated head.

...

...

At this time, Shimazu Yoshihiro.

She who confronted "Raijin" and release fighting spirits from her body and struggled to find a chance for an instant victory.....in reality.....has lost sight of the battlefield.

The unparalleled brave general "Oni Shimazu" who repeatedly piled up death training in order to cut and take the life of the enemy Shuras, has disappeared from the battlefield at this moment.

A defenseless figure with a pure emotion from a princess of marriageable age called Shimazu Yoshihiro was exposed.

Her eyesight become pure white.

The sight of Sagara Yoshiharu's figure who is kicked by Konoe Sakihisa and waiting to be decapitated after being pulled from the 4 wheeled vehicle, have disappeared.

(Sagara Yoshiharu-dono!? That's impossible!? No! Yoshiharu-dono is a ruffian. He is not a person like this! Everyone has fallen into Gaspard's scheme!)

Her heart has been taken.

*".....Yoshiharu-dono.....! Konoe-sama, wait!"*

What is she shouting about?

Even Tachibana Dosetsu's existence has disappeared from her sight.

Tachibana Dosetsu's figure took a stance with Chidori.....silently aim to Yoshihiro's heart.....lunged really quietly. The fighting spirit that he released a while ago have disappeared. Dosetsu didn't let them to sense any bloodlust while keeping a serene and graceful body like a Buddha.

(.....dammit.....)

*I was charmed by love for a moment.*

*I took pride of my body that has finally surpassed my spirit at the end of my death training and repeated battles. I believed that I have obtained the mental state of nothingness. My body will react earlier than my heart feels and think and sliced no matter what kind of sword I uses or how many Shuras there is. Mercy, hesitation and sorrow. My sword are supposed to be faster than the feelings that my hearts bears.*

*But there is just one part of my heart. An opening that weren't forged by experience.*

*That is.....a feeling of love.*

*How immature.*

*Will I be fascinated with love and die?*

*If I die, I cannot save Yoshiharu-dono.*

Regret is what Yoshihiro is thinking about.

...

...

But Tachibana Dosetsu didn't knocked over his hemiplegic body which nearly fell to lunge and cut Shimazu Yoshihiro's heart who has been stolen by love.

Dosetsu was also fascinated with Sagara Yoshiharu's appearance which is the subject of Tachibana Muneshige's first love and with defenseless cuteness of Shimazu Yoshihiro who instantly forgot the real life battlefield and turned her eyes to Sagara Yoshiharu's side.

*My life is already ended here. The person who is Muneshige's first love.....I want to see Sagara Yoshiharu-dono as well.*

After he erased his bloodlust, he didn't begin to kill Shimazu Yoshihiro.

The aged Dosetsu stabbed his sword to the ground in order to fixed his own body to the earth. As the result of a blow from Yoshihiro from this deadly standoff, his feet is bleeding and his consciousness become hazy. He staggered to have a look at Yoshiharu ho appeared in a 4 wheeled vehicle and then collapsed.

Of course.

He is able to slice Shimazu Yoshihiro if he intent to cut her while falling forward.

She is already no longer the Oni Shimazu or Takegami but an ordinary girl who is in love.

Its possible to slice her in half with Chidori.

He cannot stand up anymore once he falls down.

Dosetsu is defeated.

But he was never able to cut a princess called Shimazu Yoshihiro.

At the end of his lifetime where he did nothing more than doing battles.

He didn't take the life of a girl, Shimazu Yoshihiro.

The man that Muneshige loved.....he just wanted to take a glance at Sagara Yoshiharu's face.

He wanted to assumed it as his last action at the end of his life.

While collapsing.....the view of the earth and sky are reversed.....while looking.....Tachibana Dosetsu still sought Sagara Yoshiharu's figure. But he didn't see it. His eyesight deviated at the same time he fell down. He can only see the blue sky of Taka castle.

...

...

Dosetsu recalled it.

The time when he unexpectedly become the lord of Tachibanayama castle and changed his name to Tachibana Dosetsu.

Dosetsu immediately handed over the family inheritance to his young daughter Ginchiyo and placed her as the lord of Tachibanayama castle.

Dosetsu doesn't have a son.

There is a partner whom he thought as a son. That person had just changed his name to Takahashi Shoun. Ever since Dosetsu became hemiplegic, that unsociable master of Iai strike continued to protect Dosetsu on the battlefield. Even though their age disparity is as far from a parent to his child, there is no sense of incongruity even though he serves as Dosetsu's partner. He is an old looking man.

Takahashi Shoun thronged upon Tachibanayama castle furiously.

*"Oyassan! Because we have been an acquaintance for a long time, I predicted that you left the family inheritance to Ginchiyo! You intent to raise her as Ototachibanahime and sunk her in the battle at Hyuga to overturn the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin! Just how old do you think that brat is?!! First she is a girl! Namusanda!"*

*"HAA!! HOO!!!"*

The young Ginchiyo at the garden *"leave the Tachibana clan and Tachibanayama castle to this Ginchiyo!"* wielding a children's small halberd while shouting.

Ginchiyo weren't told about the circumstances.

A girl will be thrown away for a prophecy and die. Trained as a male samurai to die, through a death training for the sake of dying.

The aged Dosetsu weren't able to tell such heartless words to Ginchiyo whose age is equal as his own grandchild.

There is no pity for Ginchiyo.

*".....Shoun. I don't believe in that prophecy as well. but the Tachibana clan have been succeeded in this way. and my child who inherit the Tachibana clan is a princess. We are able to obtain a chance to sink Ototachibanahime to the water. Of course, the princess doesn't know about this"*

*'of course! Its only a coincidence that Tachibana(立花) and "Tachibana"(橘) have the same pronunciation! They are absolutely not the same word! It was just like when cut a lightning at Aka Yahata shrine! You are always getting too ahead of yourself! You have a wrong intense conviction!"*

*"Shoun. I have become paralyzed at one side of my body. Far from overturning the prophecy, I have become a burden to Hime-sama's heart instead. Regardless, I have to liberate Hime-sama from the prophecy"*

*"even so, you bastard! Don't you think that Ginchiyo is too pitiful?! Even a princess wouldn't be able to endure such absurd behavior!"*

Shoun hit Dosetsu's face with his fist. Dosetsu was silently being beaten. He endured it.

*"bastard! Why are you being hit one-sidedly?! Hit back like always, geezer!!"*

*".....Otouto. Tachibana clan. a princess. The sacrifice that will complete all of the condition.....there is only Ginchiyo. Of course, at the time when Ginchiyo dies come, I will die together with her. I will bring snow to the blazing battlefield"*

*"ever since you change your name, I have known about it, your idea!"*

*“there is no other ways. My life alone aren’t sufficient. To make Hime-sama’s heart who lost her Otouto from the prophecy to surfaced from the darkness, an Otouto is necessary.....forgive me Shoun”*

*“who could forgive it?! Even if its Oyassan, I could never approve it! Namusanda!”*

Shoun who is always calm and never burst out his feeling, shouted and holding Dosetsu’s body with a deep red face.

*“use my daughter! I just renamed my daughter to Takahashi Munetora! She is older than Ginchiyo and fight magnificently on the battlefield! It would take time to raise the small Ginchiyo into a full- fledged Shura! by the time the battle of Hyuga occurred, it won’t be in time! But if its Munetora, she can be a Shura immediately! That person is a genius of literally and military art! Even a kite can gave birth to a hawk!”*

*“wh-what?! Munetora?”*

*“that’s right! Its too late to suddenly brought Ginchiyo who always live like a girl until now to become a man! you received Munetora to Tachibana clan as a “husband” for Ginchiyo! This is the real Ototachibanahime!”*

Takahashi Munetora.....even though she is still young, she has shown supreme talent at bow and swordmanship. Her genius talent is even called as “The ultimate weapon of Otomo clan” on par with “Kunikuzushi” that the namban introduced. She is Takahashi Shoun’s biological daughter. In addition, she isn’t boastful about her talent and she is a princess general who is full of compassion at any places beside during severe training.

One day when Munetora took a walk at the road, she was attacked by a big fierce dog that bit her arm.

The surrounding people came in rushing *“Hime-sama!”*, *“cut it!”* but Munetora smiled.

*“a sword is meant to cut an enemy not to cut dog and cat”*

She stroke the head of the dog that bit her arm and then its said that it become emotionally attached to her.

*“even Ginchiyo would die for naught. But if we are going to do Oyassan’s plan at Hyuga, we have to rout the enemy forces while dying a honorable death! If we deliberately lose the battle, then Otomo clan will decline! Crush the enemy force and died a honorable death. Only Munetora who can accomplished both of them at the same time. She was naturally born to be Ototachibanahime”*

*“umu. Certainly, if we simply dying a honorable death then Otomo clan and Hime-sama will decline a lot. After all we don’t know whether the prophecy can be overturn or not.....but, unless we sink Ototachibanahime to the water, no matter how much Otomo clan will prosper, Hime-sama’s heart will be tied to the prophecy until she dies. The Shura who has the potential to carry two responsibilities in one lifetime.....there is no one else except Munetora. The reason is you Shoun”*

But Dosetsu weren’t able to said *“I understand”*.

Shoun’s daughter Munetora. She is an extraordinary genius child. At the same time, she also possessed a beautiful heart and her life is blessed in this world. There is too much, she has too much talent. There is too much, a very bright future ahead of her. Its too difficult to throw it away. Even if she would assume a fate to fight in this country of Shura Kyushu, she is able to grasp happiness no matter what. the Christian missionary who had seen Munetora praises her as someone who is look completely like an angel. Even though its difficult to deal with the Christians who insist that there is only one god in this world, back then Dosetsu nodded unconsciously.

*“Oyassan. Its no good if you say things like that. Saying things that it would be useless, it would break mine and your plan”*

*“.....at least.....at least, can’t you allow me to have some examination Shoun? An examination!”*

*“examination?”*



*“that’s right. If Munetora’s heart has already turned to a “maiden” then Munetora couldn’t become Hime-sama’s Otouto. Its too late. Ginchiyo’s heart is still that of a child’s, her heart is yet to belong to a man nor a woman. therefore, we would be able to make her as Hime-sama’s Otouto through training”*

*“.....fuun. I see. Its unusual for Oyassan to come up with that kind of logic. I understand. If Munetora’s heart still hasn’t turned to a “maiden”, would you made her a husband to Ginchiyo?”*

*“its unavoidable. No matter what kind of result it would give, no one among us can violate this agreement, Shoun”*

*“Munetora have reached puberty where her chest has begun to swell. Although her body has belonged to a “maiden”, I don’t know about her heart. The result for the examination.....have an even chance. But because I thought her as too cute, I have begun to raise her like a “daughter”. I have never seen her making friend with a boy too. Namusanda.....”*

There is hesitation in Shoun’s word.....one could catch a glimpse of a father’s true feelings.

*“I don’t want to break through the examination, I want it to have failed result”*  
Shoun’s hear seemed to say that. Dosetsu have seen through it.

*“fumu. I see. The chest huh.....”*

*“in the first place, we are completely ignorant about a woman’s feeling. How are we going to ascertain it Oyassan?”*

*“we cannot see the inside of her heart. But as for the beating of her heart. if it throb when I take an examination, then she is a maiden. If it doesn’t throb then she is not a maiden. Besides there is no other way I can ascertain that”*

*“.....we cannot see the inside of her heart. cough\*. I understand”*

Thus.

The fated child Munetora were called to Tachibanayama castle.

Shoun.

And Dosetsu met Munetora.

*“what on earth are you trying to do?!”* Ginchiyo running through the hall while making noise.

Munetora doesn't know her fate.

She really had a pure smile like an angel.

*“Dosetsu-sama. Thank you for inviting me. So what kind of business you have with me?”*

Dosetsu suddenly glared at Munetora and shout *“I impose a test to you!”*.....this is to disturb Munetora's heart. at the same time at the garden, there was a criminal who committed a great sin and imposed a death penalty. Shoun suddenly cut him without using lai strike. *“GUWAA!!”* the cry of the criminal during his last moment sounded.

But Munetora *“aaah. How pitiful.....”* merely murmured sorrowfully and doesn't show any turmoil. A compassionate heart and the courage of a Shura. this youth possesses both of them at the same time. Dosetsu was convinced that she is a genius. But even so, she should've been a little disturbed by this surprise.

*“this is a test to you! Munetora, you should be surprised, confused and bashful! Nuooooo!”*

(be shaken. Make you heart exploded. Even if you are not a maiden, even if your heart doesn't feel embarrassed, your feeling should be disturbed. Your heartbeat should've increased. I will concede the eligible condition to Shoun! The reason why Shoun cut a criminal because in his true feeling, he wanted you to be disqualified too! With this you will fail at the examination!) Dosetsu grabbed Munetora's chest while praying.

But Munetora loves Dosetsu like a real grandfather. She believes in him.

*“fufu. Dosetsu-sama, please stop joking. What are you doing? Its ticklish”*

She thought that Dosetsu is playing around and laughed.

Even if she was bitten by a violent dog, she laughed, she was that kind of a girl.

And Munetora's innocent heart is.....have yet to become to a maiden's.

As for Dosetsu.

*"ooh. She didn't blush nor had her heart throb! She has the courage to live as a boy! She has that quality! You will become the son in law of Tachibana clan!"*

So while he shouted.

(alas. Usa Hachiman Daibosatsu. This is)

Inside his heart, he cursed the gods and buddha for the first time in his life.

Shoun who has gone into the room *".....a splendid courage. Well done"* muttered curtly and ordered Munetora.

*"Munetora. That's it. Dosetsu-Oyassan are being persistent on making you the heir of Tachibana clan at all cost. I yielded as well. if your heart didn't throb when Oyassan touch it, then I will concede"*

*"eeh? I am a girl and Ginchiyo-dono is a girl too?! What is this called again? It's a little strange, isn't it? Awawawa"*

*".....it can't be helped huh. From now on you are the "man" of Tachibana clan"*

*"y-yes. If its what Oyaji-dono is saying.....although it would be lonely to leave Takahashi clan.....there is something deep that you two have thought about right? I understand"*

*"that's right. There is some deep meaning into it. To Otomo Sorin-sama, you must devote yourself to become Hime-sama's Otouto"* Dosetsu told it to Munetora while groaning and staring at the ceiling.

*"the lord's Otouto?! That is me?! Its an important task that I don't deserved but I will work hard!"*

*“but you know. The name Munetora wouldn’t bring good fortunes. You should introduce yourself as Muneshige(宗茂) of Tachibana clan”*

*“I understand. I have become a man but because I don’t my chest which I have received from my parent to be taken away, perhaps a given name of “growing chest”(Mune Shigeru/胸茂) is better! Dosetsu-sama. No, from now on I shall call you Gifu-jo. Thank you for your good care!”*

Dosetsu are looking up at the ceiling. He wasn’t able to turn his face back to Munetora whose name turned into Muneshige.

Ginchiyo who was surprised by the abrupt circumstances *“what do you mean that this guy will become my husband?! Does this mean that the family inheritance are being stolen?!”* begun to make an uproar and headbutted *“uugh”* Muneshige.

Shoun *“this is the unbreakable and unbending Meito “Ken-Nagamitsu”, I gave it to my daughter whom I sent to Tachibana clan as a farewell gift, no, I handed it over to my son”*.

...

...

Was it a long recollection from the past, or is it a glimpse of one’s life before the moment between life and death?

Dosetsu’s consciousness returned to the battlefield.

Only a blue sky which is visible.

*I cannot stand.*

*Muneshige, I am sorry. I cannot stand.*

*I already cannot stand with my own power.*

*At that time.*

*When I was conducting the test for the heart at that day.*

*If Muneshige's heart has become a maiden's.*

*How long did I and Shoun were grieving? How much did we weep man's tears? I already cannot remember it anymore.*

*NamuHachiman Daibosatsu. Just a little bit for me, a bit more life.....just a moment for the man who give Muneshige the happiness of being a maiden.....at least until the very end, to see Sagara Yoshiharu-dono's face.*

*And if its possible please protect Sagara Yoshiharu-dono's life.....!*

But this is the battlefield at the country of Shuras Kyushu.

Shimazu Yoshihiro who was for an instant is charmed by love and exposed a completely defenseless body and heart, jumped down backward after recognizing the perfect lack of bloodlust and the stolen initiative from Dosetsu's movement who has exhausted all of his might and crumbled down to her chest.

No, Shimazu Yoshihiro's heart is still stolen by Sagara Yoshiharu.

*I will not be in time if I keep continuing the fight. I will not be able to rescue him. This is all a misunderstanding. This is Gaspard's trap. Its impossible for Sagara Yoshiharu-dono to be the mastermind. I must stop Konoe Sakihisa-sama. If its not stopped, even if I would become a rebel, then I will.....*

But Shimazu Yoshihiro's body which has survived through many death training and battlefield has surpassed her mind.

The chance of instant death that were stolen by Dosetsu, at the moment her body recognized it, Shimazu Yoshiharu's trembling body which has completely separated from her mind jumped out and barely dodge Dosetsu. Furthermore, Yoshihiro's body is still moving while ignoring her mind. She pulled out a Kodachi with one hand while keeping her Zanbato in other hand to pull out a single counterattack to Tachibana Dosetsu who prostrated himself to the ground.

Tachibana Dosetsu and Shimazu Yoshihiro. They are differs against each other to a sorrowful degree while both of them are pursing the same figure of Sagara Yoshiharu. the words cannot be avoided. The talk bet sword and sword. The

struggle for life. that is as if the fate of being born as a samurai, a Shura of Kyushu couldn't be avoided.

*"what, I was reluctant to look away Oyassan! I won't let you!"*

Takahashi Soun draw his sword and jumped towards Shimazu Yoshihiro's heart with a speed that transcend human's intellect and thrust it towards Yoshihiro's abdomen. With a speed that cannot be catch with human eyes. But Yoshihiro raised her one knee before it pierce her abdomen, drop her elbow and put the sword between her knee and elbow.....the sword is broken.

*"chi! Did it cut too many bullets? What a dull sword!"*

After Shoun instantly left his broken sword, he jump to prepare a counterattack against Yoshihiro. Back to the place where Dosetsu prostates himself to the ground. But Shound doesn't have any sword on his waist anymore.

Shimazu Yoshihiro already have no time to think about something else. Even her love which pursue Sagara Yoshiharu cannot be tolerated anymore. This is a battlefield. Tachibana clan is standing on her way. If she doesn't moves, she will be killed.

The Kodachi which should've been used against Dosetsu was being thrown into Shoun's left thigh.

The movement of Shoun's mind cannot keep up.

The Kodachi sealed his leg.

Shimazu Yoshihiro who raised her Zanbato in Tonbo no Kamae, while silently pressed her right foot "don" in pursuit of Shoun and.....brought down the first stroke of "Jigen-ryu".....

*"this person?!! Her eyes. It sees nothing.....this person had attained the perfect mental state of nothingness! Her body has surpassed her mind and its moving faster than she could think! This princess general.....the Shimazu Takegami.....! Namusanda!"*

Shoun shouted while falling to cover Dosetsu's body.

*"its coming, Muneshigeeee!!!!!! Without "Ken-Nagamitsu", you cannot receive a single blow from this Takegami! Escapeee!!!! Hurrriyy to Takigawa!!!!"*

However.

For Tachibana Muneshige.

For the first time ever since she was born.

Are going against her father's order.

All feelings nearly crushed Muneshige's heart.

Those feelings exploded in one breath.

Fate.

Prophecy.

Loyalty.

Two father.

Ginchiyo.

Otouto.

First love.

The Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro who stand on her way.

To die, simply to die at this war on this day, she had lived.

Even her last wish aren't granted.

Enough.

There is no more talking.

She turned the tip of her sword and rushes to Shimazu Yoshihiro.

But even faster than her sword could reached Yoshihiro's throat.

The first stroke of "Jigen-ryu"

Shoken Goroshi.

Yoshihiro's Zanbato was swung downward towards Muneshige's head.

Its not visible.

It cannot be seen by naked eyes.

Just like a bullet shot from Tanegashima.

But the windflow was felt.

Muneshige's bowmanship that were learned from Dosetsu, the sword of Zan-Dan that were taught by Shoun, because all of her training started by feeling the windflow.

If "Ken-Nagamitsu" is in her hand right now.

Even if you regretted it, you cannot redo your life.

*Aah. Its imposible.*

A single certain death blow from this Oni Shimazu's sword, its impossible to receive it during the first time the enemies sees it.

There is no such human being nor a general who can do it.

Suddenly.

A voice was heard.

(you are "Nishikoku Musou")

It was Yoshiharu's voice.

Her sword which she held horizontally just barely receives it.

An impact that could broke the bone of both of her arm.



Her feet sink into the ground.

She cannot completely receive it.

The sword bended while receiving Yoshihiro's strike.

It cannot withstand the pressure.

Its fractured.

Even if its miraculously didn't fractured, it will split her head together with her helmet.

Muneshige's body is gradually being pushed against her back.

Emotion returned to Shimazu Yoshihiro's eyes which is vacant as if it doesn't see anything and she found out.

*".....the first stroke of my "Jigen-Ryu", is received.....?"*

Shock, awe, respect, and sorrow that cannot be expressed. Yoshihiro's feeling that has been completely influenced by the body of Shura recalled all of those feeling.

However.

Two people are struggling for each other life at Kawahara sandbank in Taka castle.

That's the destiny of a person who was born as a Shura.

*"Tachibana Muneshige-dono. You truly are "Nishikoku Musou". But its useless. That Katana.....that sword, is no more"*



At Sou camp – Ginchiyo who saw the figure of Muneshige which was pushed down by Shimazu Yoshihiro, cling to Ken-Nagamitsu with a desperate look while shaking and struggled to pull out the word from the ground.

*“Hime-sama! My husband. Please don’t let Muneshige die! Muneshige need this Ken-Nagamitsu! If she had this legendary Meito, Muneshige can defeat Shimazu Yoshihiro! Even Sagara Yoshiharu.....even that man from the future praised Muneshige! so much, that he admired her! but even so.....! Sagara Yoshiharu, Muneshige, Chichiue, everyone will die! The bodyguards.....please move the bodyguards! Please!! Dammit~, come out!! Come oooooout!!”*

*“koke~! Koke, koke, koke~!”*

Along with Ginchiyo, Tocco keep thrusting its injured beak to Ken-Nagamitsu while crying loudly.

When the chicken cries reached Sorin’s ear.

That one phrase from the bible that captivated Sorin’s heart when she contacted Christianity for the first time.....she recalled the word that were said by Jesus who is foretold to be betrayed by his student Peter.

...

*“tonight, before the chicken cries, you would say that you don’t know me thrice”*

...

When she heard these words, she who had let her Otouto to die without helping three times, Sorin felt as if her perfidiousness, injustice morals and cowardice were foretold by Jesus and felt frightened all the way. In fact, Shioichimaru in “Nikaikuzurenohen”. Shiootomaru and Ouchi Teruhiro in the battle against Mori Motonari. Otomo Chikasada in the battle of Imayama against Ryuzoji Takanobu. 4 peoples which 3 of them are her Otoutos have been killed.

And now, Tachibana Muneshige who will become “Ototachibanahime”.

Tachibana Dosetsu, Takahashi Shoun and Sagara Yoshiharu. everyone will die.

Furthermore, Muneshige couldn't arrive at Takigawa yet. Before Ototachibanahime sank into the water, her head will be splitted by Shimazu Yoshihiro.

The prophecy didn't get overturned in the end.....

.....no, that's not right. Because Ouchi Teruhiro left a message to Sorin so that she will not count him as one of her Otoutos.

Muneshige.....Sorin suddenly noticed that she is her 4<sup>th</sup> Otouto.

That's why, just slightly before the 4<sup>th</sup> Otouto died.....the chicken cried.

Thrice. The daily days where Sorin were cursed to let her Otoutos die is about the over now.

No, that's not the case.

It will be over from now on.

Sorin will end it with her own will.

*Aah. I am.*

*"right now I have found my own hearts"* Soin thought.

Xavier's words was heard in Sorin's ears.

...

*"the prophecy is something that only oneself can found within one's own mind"*

...

And the words of Sagara Yoshiharu.

...

*“believe in the words of the person who say that he/she want to save you and not in the words of the old women who cursed you”*

...

...

*I am.*

*I really wanted to believe in those words.....the words that I am always looking for.....*

...

*“Shioichimaru. Shiootomaru. Ouchi Teruhiro. Otomo Chikasada. Everyone, no one bears a grudge against you. The person who is blaming you for not being able to protect your Otouto. Is you”*

...

At the throne, Otomo Sorin.....throw away her namban chair. Kicked down the flag of Lily Crusade and run with her own leg and clenched Ken-Nagamitsu.

...

*“uaa.....uaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa~!!”*

...

Sorin has.

Ken-Nagamitsu.

Pulled it out.

*Enough.....whatever kind of prophecy it is, its fine.*

*Dosetsu.*

*Shoun.*

*Muneshige.*

*Yoshihi.*

*Sagara Yoshiharu.*

*Everyone, be alive.*

*Be alive.*

*You are dying for my cowardice.*

*Enough, I won't repeated it.*

*I will fight.*

Sorin is right now, is living in the reality.

She ran towards the battlefield.

The 20000 bodyguard units, all of them pursued Sorin's back.

There is someone in the horseback who held out her white hand to Sorin.

...

*".....rather than running on your own, waiting until this much aren't so painful"*

...

*Sagara Yoshihi.*

*I wasn't abandoned.*

*I was waited.*

*I was believed.*

...

*"you cannot run on foot with your physical strength Sorin. Take it"*

...

Sorin clasped the hand that Yoshihi held out.

Her skin is pure white and her body is delicate. Yet, Yoshihi's hand is strong.

...

*"don't drop the sword that you want to give to Muneshige. have you found the dream that you wished to protect? Why do you born? Why do you die for? Or what is the meaning of your life? is there any determination to reject the unreasonable fate that keep tormenting you?"*

...

*There is. I will not hesitate any longer. I will not be frightened any longer.*

*Therefore take me to the battlefield.*

Sorin shouted while crying.

She ride unto the horseback.

...

*"Kuroda Kanbei are still waiting for the reserved last move. My Otouto is also buying some time by using his own head as the compesation. If all of the 20000 bodyguard units descend from the hills simulatenously, then Shimazu army will have to re-arrange their formation. Though it would be a little bit, the fight will be stopped in confusion for a while! Its possible to earn some time, even if it just a little!"*

...

...

Sagara Yoshiharu is waiting to be beheaded on top of the vehicle. Tachibana Dosetsu's body fell due to blood loss and at the moment when Shimazu Yoshihiro's body which has been well trained to cut the enemy, unconsciously move to aim for Dosetsu's neck, *"damn it. Is it not in time? It's a failure.....!"*, he shouted.

At the same time as Yoshihiro sprung into action, Takahashi Shoun and Tachibana Muneshige charged toward Yoshihiro. The battle for both sides has resumed.

*“we already cannot do anything more than this. It’s the same until the final moment Sagara Yoshiharu”* Kuroda Kanbei muttered while hugging Yoshiharu’s body. The joy of losing the opportunity to drop Yoshiharu’s head and the despair over the collapse of Nobuna’s dream of Tenka Fubu, Kanbei make an expression where no one could understand whether she is crying or laughing.

*“is this my fault? Because we continued to pass each other until the last moment that we cannot connect to each other.....”*

At this moment.

Konoe Sakihisa who held his sword raised a shout with a high pitched voice while staring at the northern coast.

*“this is a serious matter de-ojaru! The bodyguard units led by Otomo Sorin have moved de-ojaru!”*

...

...

The Tachibana clan, Sagara Yoshiharu, Kuroda Kanbei and of course Shimazu 4 sisters.

A moment that nobody expected, has occurred into the mortal battlefield.

Otomo Sorin’s army at the north Sou camp, the 20000 bodyguard units, with Sorin and Yoshihi in the lead, simultaneously moved like a raging billow towards Kawahara sandbank.

Yoshihiro who was shocked by Konoe Sakihisa’s declaration to behead Sagara Yoshiharu. Surely at that time, Yoshihiro’s expression changed for an instant from a face of a Shura to an expression of a girl. But her body didn’t get sliced by Dosetsu’s sword. Why is it? Yoshihiro didn’t understand.



There is no recollection from the moment when the “Raijin” Tachibana Dosetsu mutually glared into her while releasing their fighting spirit until the moment where he suddenly prostates in the ground. Her body which she trained to kill the “Raijin” moved on its own. From that point, her mind doesn’t think anymore. At least she barely remembers that she broke Shoun’s sword. When she notices it, Yoshihiro push her Zanbato to Tachibana Muneshige after using every other sword she held and just a little more it would slice Muneshige’s forehead. Muneshige was a dreadful Shura. The certain one hit killer move “Satsuma Jigen-Ryu” that she trained for cutting down Kai Soun and kept hidden when she fought Dosetsu and Shoun, was blocked with just one sword. It was absolutely hard to believe that this is her first campaign. If it’s a fight between Taisha-Ryu, both of Yoshihiro’s arms would drop after being sliced. But its unfortunate that Muneshige didn’t have her beloved strongest sword “Ken-Nagamitsu” that was handed over by her father Takahashi Shoun. That is the only differences.

Now Shimazu Yoshiharu has completely pulled herself together. Her mind has recovered.

*“Otomo Sorin moved?! Its impossible for that to happened. The morale of the 20000 bodyguard units is abnormal. All of them has become death soldiers in order to save Sagara Yoshiharu and Tachibana clan! although Otomo army whill be annihilated, Shimazu army will be annihilated too!”*

With the way things are going, the “Bear of Hizen” Ryuzoji Takanobu who is watching the course of this battle from Saga castle will be the sole winner.

Yoshihiro instantly leave Muneshige, mounted Hizaori Kurige and left Tachibana clan. She looked for Iehisa and the others and joined them

*“Iehisa! Toshihisa! Anesha! We already end up crossed Takigawa! It’s the backwater! Assume Crane Wing formation.....!”*

*“nyaa! Yoshihiro-Nee! The Tachibana clan are too quick and its hard to covering the fire!”*

*“both armies can no longer use anymore large scaled ambush Nee-san. In other words, both army doesn’t have any tactics and strategies anymore”*

*“what should we do Yoshihiro?! There is not time to pull out any fortune slips anymore?!”*

Its already in the backwater. If they retreat and show their back, Shimazu army will suffer crushing defeat by Otomo army. Someone among the 4 sisters would die. They have no choice to fight in the front to survive.

But if both army keep stay to fight just like the battle of Kawanakajima, Shimazu and Otomo army will receive a blow that they wouldn’t be able to recover from. Its decided that Ryuzoji Takanobu of Hizen will gain control of Kyushu and the war of Oda Nobuna’s Tenka Fubu at Honshu will collapse.

(at the moment when Dosetsu-dono collapses, I am pretty sure that Dosetsu-dono have directed a single blow at the risk of his life towards my body. Because I was blocked by Tachibana clan and cannot escape from Otomo army, I feared a conclusion where Sagara Yoshiharu-dono will be beheaded for the sake of reconciling both army. Normally, it was the moment where my mind would surpass it and brought my brought under its control. And yet, my heart was stunned and thrown out of order when hearing the sudden declaration of Sagara Yoshiharu’s decapitation.....I originally, wouldn’t cut Dosetsu-dono, Shoun-dono, Muneshige-dono and anyone else. Why did for some reason Dosetsu-dono didn’t kill me during my fatal moment? If Shoun-dono or Muneshige-dono have “Ken-Nagamitsu” in their hand, they would be able to stop my strike and cut me down. Especially to Muneshige-dono who blocked the first strike of “Satsuma Jigen-Ryu” which abandon its defense.....as the result, it caused the worst situation where Otomo Sorin stand up to fight. With this I cannot make any excuses to Yoshiharu-dono. I am too immature.....!) Shimazu Yoshihiro bit her lip.

...

...

50000 Otomo army. 40000 Shimazu army. each army make their appearances at Kawahara sandbank. Tsuru no Buse cannot be used anymore. It's a full scale confrontation in local war between the conqueror of Kita-Kyushu and the conqueror of Minami-Kyushu – Satsuma Hayato.

*".....that Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro is formidable. Its possible to reach Takigawa but.....Hime-sama.....Hime-sama is riding a horse. She is bringing Ken-Nagamitsu to our place. Sagara Yoshiharu-dono is still alive.....oh. The young Kyushu youths have the look of a soldier. Really similar to Sagara Yoshihiro-dono.....Shoun, Muneshige, is this a dream? Have I been hallucinating since I have lost a lot amount of bloods?"*

*"Oyassan. Its not an illusion. Hime-sama took up Ken-Nagamitsu and personally fight on the battlefield in order to save Oyassan and Muneshige. she run through the battlefield to deliver the sword to Muneshige. the prophecy of Usa Hachiman-jin doesn't bind Hime-sama anymore. Mattaku! This wouldn't happen if Muneshige didn't leave behind Ken-Nagamitsu. I don't know whether its fortunate that she want to fight. Namusanda!"*

*"Muneshige. you skillfully received and withstand the one hit killer move of Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro without using Ken-Nagamitsu. You truly are "Nishikoku Musou". Together with Sagara Yoshiharu-dono and Kuroda Kanbei-dono from now on you will, to Hime-sama....."*

*"right now master is free from the prophecy at last. Gifu-jo and Yoyaji-dono's prayer have come true. But with the things are going.....both army have confronted each other. Both army will be annihilated"* Tachibana Muneshige bit her lip while raising Dosetsu's body. Strangely, it was the same expression with Shimazu Yoshihiro when she said *"I am too immature"* while shaking.

...

...

However, at the time when the full scale confrontation between Otomo and Shimazu started to begin.

It was a military unit that consist of very few number that Shimazu Toshihisa aren't able to detect it. It marched towards Taka castle through the western mountain while raising a white flag of surrender.....there is no chance for it to be discovered. Its not a unit consist of human. They are tens of several herds of bears. There bears were assimilated to the forest without having camouflage itself.

*"unyuu! The pursuit of Hagakure-Shinobi squad are too severe de-gozaru! After borrowing Indou-dono from Tokuchiyo-dono, thank you de-gozaru!"*

*"gauu!"*

Hachisuka Goemon straddles upon the bear that run in the front.

Kuroda Kanbei who saw Goemon *"thank goodness. The last move had arrived in time"* glued to Yoshiharu's neck.

Because Sorin charging with bodyguard units, the time that should've been run out have been produced. Finally, at the end, all condition has been met.....Yoshiharu patted Kanbei's head *"I don't understand it well but it was in time! Its Kruokan Ichiryuu!"* and lifted Kanbei's body. Konoe Sakhihisa nodded and declared with a high pitched voice again.

*"halt, people of Otomo and Shimazu clan! that shinobi is ordered by Kuroda Kanbei as a spy to see the secret movement of Ryuzoji Takanobu of Hizen! Ryuzoji Takanobu has discovered that Tachibana clan of Chikuzen has secretly entered the war of Taka castle and use the opportunity when Otomo and Shimazu army clashed against each other to move and control Kita-Kyushu! Because that shinobi had endured many wounds, there is no doubt! Hyuga will be divided into north and south, the Otomo clan that control the north from Mimigawa will reconcile with a condition that Shimazu clan will govern the south! This is the will of Himiko-sama de-ojaru!"*

The true reason why Kuroda Kanbei daringly called Tachibana clan which os the pivot of defenses of Chikuzen to Taka castle is this.

*"mufu~! It was decided! This is the strategic skill of Kurokan Ichiryuu! To begin with, I have to defeat Ryuzoji clan who is patiently waiting for a good opportunity to rebel*

*against Otomo clan. even if I wanted to bring reinforcement to Oda Nobuna, Otomo Sorin wouldn't be able to move out from Kyushu! Therefore, by making Tachibana to daringly abandon the defense of Chikuzen, I have instigated Ryuzoji clan's ambition. I have made them to rise in action much quicker! How is that Sagara Yoshiharu!"*

*"but Kanbei? Even if Ryuzoji Takanobu invaded Chikuzen, is there any reason for Otomo clan to reconcile with Shimazu clan?! but won't Otomo clan perished?!"*

*"it won't happen! Ryuzoji Takanobu doesn't trust any human being aside from his Imouto Nabeshima Naoshige at all! He is a skeptical and cautious man! Simon sent a letter to Buzen Nakatsu 12000 Koku when Otomo clan win this battle in order to entrap Ryuzoji Takanobu into suspicion. Furthermore, to prove that the private agreement is true, Ryuzoji Takanobu is suspect that Simon intentionally emptied Chikuzen to be rather doubtful! Because he is a man who is thoroughly full of misanthropy! The person who keeps on betraying other are also convinced that he would be betrayed as well! furthermore, since it was just like that time when Ryuzoji Takanobu won the battle of Imayama by defeating Otomo clan which was commanded by Sorin who remained as a spectator without participating at all until the end and then give up, for that reason, that guy must have considered that Otomo clan will lose this time as well! even Simon didn't expect that Sorin would possibly led the army to the battlefield when I brought Sorin to Taka castle!"*

*"and then?"*

*"because Otomo clan will be defeated in a decisive battle against Shimazu army, Ryuzoji Takanobu can take Chikuzen at any time. He can also use Simon's secret letter to take Buzen eventually. Therefore Ryuzoji Takanobu started a suppression to south Hizen and Higo in order to forestall Shimazu army northern expedition when they crushed Otomo clan at sunrise. First, they will swallow Aso clan which is the sworn ally of Sagara clan of Shimazu and raises a sense of impending crisis so that Aso clan would invade the territory of Sagara clan which is Yatsushiro of south Higo. At the same time, Ryuzoji Takanobu will smash Arima clan of Shimabara who is the ally of Otomo Sorin that hold a stronghold in south Hizen. He must recapture the authority over Ariake sea so that Shimazu clan cannot strike Hizen! The Shimazu*

*clan must rescue Sagara Tokuzhiyo from the crisis and to stop Ryuzoji clan advancement to the south, they have to formed a reconciliation with Otomo army and they have no choice but to immediately win the fight against Ryuzoji army! Otomo clan cannot abandon their sworn ally Arima clan as well! thus, Otomo army are also has no choice but to make peace with Shimazu clan as well! if both army reconciled here, Simon will immediately led Otomo army to Suo.....and make a great counterstrike to Mori army! because Gaspard who is the obstacle for the reconciliation of both army is stuck at the far away Takachiho after being followed by the watchdog Frois, he is not in Taka castle! Haha! Its KU-RO-KAN-ICHIRYUU!"*

*"almost everything has gone according to strategist-dono plan de-gozaru, but" on top of Indou, Goemon told it while running.*

*"we have been outwitted, the key point of Otomo clan, the Yanagawa castle of Chikugo has been taken! All of the Kamachi clan who has returned to Yanagawa castle is killed!"*

※

Shimazu Iehisa shut herself inside Taka castle. 50000 Otomo army departed from Mushiga to capture Taka castle.

Shimazu Yoshihisa and Shimazu Yoshihiro also come with a reserve force of 40000 soldiers to rescue Taka castle.....

The full blown clash between the two army is inevitable, it couldn't be avoided.

At Saga castle of Hizen, the ambitious man Ryuzoji Takanobu who call himself as the future supreme ruler of Kyushu have stood up.

Ryuzoji Takanobu wear a bear skin leathered armor. The natives of Satsuma – The Hayato people and the natives of south Higo – The Kumaso people are feared by the people of Kyoto. Although he is not a native of Higo, Ryuzoji Takanobu who take pride with his outstanding huge build among the Shura of Kyushu and wear a

bear skin leather armor like the people of Kumaso, seemed to look like a genuine brown bear.

*“fuhahaha! We are finally free from Otomo clan’s yoke and the opportunity to conquer Kyushu has come, my Imouto! I will mobilize all from Ryuzoji Shiten’O and Hagakura-Shinobi squad! I will clear that humiliation from that time when I have no choice but to become a subordinate to Otomo clan after the battle of Imayama!”*

His stepsister Nabeshima Naoshige who is dressed in black as if she has disappeared into the darkness, stopped her Ani. Behind Naoshige’s back, at the place where many people’s blood is flowing, there is a black cat crying “miya~” .....

*“wait, Oni-sama. Its only safe to move after the battle of Taka castle is over. Even if Buzen Nakatsu Juni Magoku Ishi will be obtained if we are being silent when Otomo clan win.....everything may be a trap from Kuroda Kanbei. That person pretend to be a puppet for the missionary Gaspard while in truth she daringly brought a war between Otomo and Shimazu clan so that they would reconciled for the sake of Oda Nobuna. Now, if Oni-sama sneakily stand up to overwhelmed Kita-Kyushu, the reconciliation of both Otomo and Shimazu army will be formed in a hurry. Isn’t the reason why Kanbei brought Sorin to the battlefield is because Taka castle is the place where the reconciliation will take place?”*

*“according Hagakure-Shinobu squad information during an absolutely secret march towards Taka castle, Tachibana Dosetsu and Takahashi Shoun have secretly left Chikuzen. This is without a doubt is Kanbei’s plot. By letting Tachibana clan to suddenly appeared behind Taka castle and blocking lehisa’s Tsuru no Buze at the same time, I have given a bait before Oni-sama’s eyes to revolt” Nabeshima Naoshige persuades, “my Imouto, you are a resourceful person and worry too much. Now that the defense of Chikuzen is almost empty, this is a good opportunity” Ryuzoji Takanobu laughed.*

*“Kuroda Kanbei certainly have taken measures that deceive me. But it’s a known fact that that brat has lack of deep consideration! Isn’t that person is famous for her strategic skill which would always blunder in its last decisive factor and fail?! There is no way for that cowardly Otomo Sorin to magnificently confront the tough*

*Shimazu army! she would run away without a doubt while crying when she saw the figure of the Takegami – Shimazu Yoshihiro wielding her sword in the battlefield and rampaging around! No matter how shrewd Kuroda Kanbei will act, the reconciliation will not be accomplished! Shimazu army will pursue the escaping Otomo Sorin and it would ended in Otomo army be annihilated in Mimigawa for not being able to move anymore!”*

*“if Kuroda Kanbei sent a spy to Hizen, you must kill them with Hagakure-Shinobi squad that you commanded, my Imouto!” Ryuzoji Takanobu shouted with bloodshot eyes.*

*“didn’t you knew well about Otomo Sorin’s cowardice at the battle of Imayama?! Its not possible for her to defeat me who shut myself inside Saga castle, all while she is running away for being frightened and recruit her Otouto to fight and then killed! That woman is a weak willed trash that has no right to live in Kyushu! We will move!”*

*“well then, let’s revolt against Otomo Sorin and capture Chikuzen which has become empty”*

*“no. Chikuzen and Hakata port as well as Buzen Nakatsu is a bait that Kuroda Kanbei used to entrap us. Otomo clan will decline soon. After completely losing her brave and resourceful generals at Taka castle, her dream of building Mushiga will be shattered and Sorin wouldn’t be able to stand up. She will have no choice but to fall into obscurity at Bungo! I can take Buzen or Chikuzen any time! Its necessary to block the powerful Satsuma Hayato – the Shimzu clan in order for Ryuzoji clan to become the supreme ruler of Kyushu! I must first gain control Nishi-Kyushu that stretched from Hizen to Higo! The Aso clan of north Higo has already been taken by your plan and they have abandoned their alliance to Otomo clan and vowed subordination to Ryuzoji clan. Aso has a pedigree of being the Aso Daiguji. They won’t accept the Christians kingdom that Sorin advocates”*

Aso High Priest

Although the present head of Aso clan is a mediocre person, there is Kai Soun in Aso clan. Although Kai Soun is a sworn ally of Sagara Yoshihi who promised a



contract of renunciation of war to each other, he has no trouble attacking the present head of Sagara clan which has changed to Yoshihi's Imouto.

*"if the lips are gone, the teeth will gone cold (if one of two interdependent things fall, the other will be in danger). If its sworn ally – the Sagara clan that hold a stronghold in Higo together with them become a subordinate to Shimazu clan, Aso clan will get impatient. They will judged that they can no longer put their hope upon Otomo clan which has been split into the faction of pro-christians and anti-christians, if they cannot dominate Ryuzoji clan as an absolute retainers"*

*"but. What if the Shimazu clan swiftly marched from Higo to Hizen after fighting Otomo clan?"*

*"hmp. My Imouto. It's the truth that Otomo's 50000 soldiers is its major power. but Shimazu's 40000 soldiers is the combined personnel from all of their unarmed population that they gather through force. Its because Satsuma and Oosumi is scarcely populated. Thinking it from the view of supplies and the others, their combat ready military power amounted from ten to twenty thousand soldiers. Furthermore, even though they are powerful in the ground they are weak in naval combat. Its because they have no experience in fighting in the large sea like Ariake sea. Even if they try to forcibly cross over Shimabara peninsula through ships, they can only transport about 1500 soldiers at a time at most. On the other hand, our forces have taken a hostage from Matsuura faction of Hirado and Omura clan of Nagasaki to make them out subordinate. The supply line from the land to the sea for our forces is perfect"*

*"although Omura clan will not do something reckless like rebelling against Oni-sama. The Matsuura faction are pirates that has risen up to a strong independent group. Furthermore, they almost have controlled the sea of Hizen. Don't you think that there is an unlikely chance that Matsuura faction will double cross us?"*

*"huun. I have confiscated all of their firearm that they obtained from namban trade. Even if they want to betray us, they can only move as supply corps. Right now, they have been scheduled to command a supply route from the sea"*

*“.....if Oni-sama intent to block Shimazu army’s advancement to the north in the form of “Sangokuteiritsu”, then the three factions that should be captured is.....the Arima clan of Shimabara peninsulas of south Hizen. The Sagara clan of Kuma Yatsushiro of south Higo. If these two are attacked and crushed then its possible to gain command upon Ariake sea single handedly. Shimazu clan will not be able to send their powerless naval forces to Hizen anymore. But.....they are still a land path towards Hizen. The key point Yanagawa castle of Chikugo”*

Three Kingdom Contest

Takanobu Ryuzoji carved a bear shaped pieces while staring at the map of Kyushu. Ryuzoji clan main stronghold – Saga castle of north Hizen. Otomo clan subordinates – the earliest Christian daimyo, Arima clan that rules over Shimabara peninsula of south Hizen. The Aso clan of north Higo.

*“that’s right. The east of Saga castle. Yanagawa castle of Chikugo. I must steal Yanagawa castle from Kamachi clan”*

*“that Gishou Kamachi Muneyuki has helped me twice. Although he participated in the battle of Taka castle with Otomo Sorin, Kamachi Muneyuki’s heir and present head of Kamachi clan – Kamachi Shigenami has deserted his father and Otouto to return to Yanagawa castle by himself. I don’t know if its about Kamachi Muneyuki but its not necessary to feel obliged to Kamachi Shigenami.....Kamachi Shigenami is the husband of my stepsister Tamatsuru. Invite him to Sarugaku when I already took them to Saga castle”* Ryuzoji Takanobu chuckled. It was a savage smile that abandoned both honors and emotions.

Monkey Show

*“Oni-sama?! Don’t tell me that you really intent to kill Kamachi Shigenami?”*

Famous Castle

*“even if I try to conquer the Meijo – Yanagawa castle that Muneyuki have repaired many times, it would take 3 years. In that case, the opportunity will be lost! If I assassinate Shigenami, I will obtain Yanagawa castle in one day! If I make Kai Soun to attack Sagara clan and then capture Yanagawa castle at the same time, Shimazu wouldn’t be able to enter Saga castle from the land route. Afterwards, if I subjugate Arima clan, gain control of the Shimabara peninsula and the authority of the sea, Shimazu clan will not be able to do a single thing! they will be shut inside Satsuma*

*and Oosumi! With this, the three states of Hizen, Higo and Chikugo will belong to my Ryuzoji clan. with the three states of west Kyushu is in our hand, Shimazu clan advancement to the north will be prevented. The natives of Kyushu will bow down to me at once. After we possessed one third of Kyushu, Chikuzen and Buzen will fall to our hand easily, Iki archipelago and Tsushima island will bow down as well and I will become the Taishou of Gokounishima! Meanwhile at Honshu, the*

The One Who Reign The World

*Tenkabito Oda Nobuna will be overthrown by the world great rebellion.....there is enough time for me to sweep over Kyushu!"*

Nabeshima Naoshige wanted to stop her Ani who floated an insane smile. However she already decided to faithfully carry out any kind of her Ani's outrageous order. (if such evil deeds are done, my Oni-sama will cease for being a human anymore.....) although she is worried, Naoshige decided to assassinate Kamachi Shigenami and his whole clan. How many people has been killed and how much crime has been committed for the sake of her Ani's burning ambition to the become the Supreme Ruler of Kyushu? Enough, Naoshige cannot remember it anymore. *When did us brother and sister made a mistake?* The black cat rode upon Naoshige's shoulder "miyaa~" cried once again.

But, five Shuras who are covered in bear skin suddenly intruded to the tea ceremonial room which is where the confidential talk between the siblings take places.....

*"muu. It's the complete five of Ryuzoji Shiten'O, huh?! What the hell is it?! Don't enter my Imouto's tea ceremony without permission!"*

*"milord, you are losing your mind. No matter how much Kyushu is called as the country of Shuras, there is things that are called as minimum morality. Please don't perform a foul act against Kamachi clan whom we owes a great favor"*

The veteran general who captured the Otomo army supreme commander in the battle of Imayama – Narimatsu Nobukatsu. Even though he still regretted about cutting the head of the young Otomo Chikasada who beg for his life by Takanobu's order, nonetheless, he still have loyalty towards Takanobu.

*“we the samurai of Saga promised that we will die through Bushido, for that we are always be prepared to throw away our lives to milord at any time! But! This is too, its too heartless and inhuman! What will happen to your stepsister Tamatsuru-sama that married the Kamachi clan?!”*

The master of lone horseman, Eriguchi Nobutsune. He who is always being combat ready at all time and regard that death will come 24/7. He has gone through a lot emotional heave and is already crying. Even though he has dissuade Takanobu’s tyranny many time until now while crying, the magnitude of his feeling is different only this time.

*“its still the same complete five! Milord! There is one impostor among Ryuzoji Shiten’O! umuu. Who is this impostor? Its impossible to be seen even for this Kinoshita Masanao!”*

The wise man of the Shiten’O. Kinoshita Masanao serves as the direct adjutant of Naoshige. He is a former priest who migrated to Saga from Kyoto. Because he is well informed about the situation of Honshu, he took an active role to connecting Ryuzoji clan to Honshu. However, probably because he is not a retainer under Takanobu’s direct order, he has a habit of saying *“there is an impostor, an impostor”* and often being removed from Ryuzoji Shiten’O if one’s lose their focus.

*“I am giving up on this nonsense. To willfully murder the Kamachi whom you owed too many great debt which you will never to pay back, milord, you are losing your edge. Daring to do such outrageous act. Do you want all Shuras of Kyushu to become your enemy? To begin with, its strange that there is five of Shiten’O. You may erase my name from Ryuzoji Shiten’O. Goodbye”*

The brave man whom Takanobu recognized to be equal to 100 Shuras, Hyakutake Tomokane was given the surname “Hyakutake”. He is a man of delicate features who always draw close to Takanobu to protect him while always wearing full body golden armor in the battlefield. But if he got enraged, he is a Kabuki man who always said things that he likes without hesitation to Takanobu in composed manner even though he is just a retainer.

*“can’t you wait? Hyakutake-dono! Nu. I almost forgot.....milord! With the things are going, the mind of Ryuzoji retainers group will become loose and collapsing. Everyone, we have understand that painful resolution about milord’s feeling of becoming the Supreme Ruler of Kyushu, no matter how much of sacrifices there would be. For that reason, we have no regret of dying and be damned into hell if we got involved to any form of wickedness. But there is a limit. Justice is also necessary for the country of Shuras”*

He has a huge build and a distinctive bear-like appearance just like Takanobu. His name is Enjouji Nobutane. He always took an active part in the battlefield as the body double of Takanobu.

*“be quiet! I cannot take Yanagawa castle if I don’t take coercive action. I cannot defeat Shimazu clan if I don’t take Yanagawa castle! I have no crime! Kamachi Shigenami has cowardly escaped from the battlefield and returned by abandoning his Otouto and Muneyuki! That person has no right to live in Kyushu! My Imouto, deploy Hagakure-Shinobu squad! Surround Kamachi clan as soon as they enter Saga castle! Shiten’O, you bastard must kill all of Kamachi Shigenami’s relatives with your power! do not let one person alive!”* Takanobu ordered while being enraged.

*“this is the last first opportunity to become the Supreme Ruler of Kyushu! It’s the good luck that I have obtained after enduring so many things! If this chance aren’t taken, I will regret it until death! Ignore Hyakutake! Kill Kamachi clan~! once Yanagawa castle surrender, immediately marched towards Shimabara peninsula with the entire Ryuzjoi army! In response to Kai Soun invading Sagara clan territory Yatsuhira, we will pulverize Arima clan!”*

*Kai Soun will first took control of Yatsushiro port which is essential for the sake of Shimazu clan march toward Hizen through the sea route. I will control Shimabara peninsula which will become the landing place for Shimazu clan. for Shimazu who has lost their waterway will have to take the land route to got to Hizen, they must defeat Kai Soun and there is the impregnable Yanagawa castle ahead of there. with this, Shimazu clan is checkmated. The territory of Otomo clan who has collapsed from the battle of Taka castle will erode.....the Shimazu clan who is naturally has*

*little population, they can be overcome through the strength of the nation. I can win!*

The Shiten'O except Hyakutake Tomokane who had returned home without notice *"with this, the Ryuzoji clan has finally lose its fidelity", "already", "for the sake of the lord", "we the Shiten'O has no choice but to become the shield"* they are determined and this time pile up their fist and nodded to each other.

*"miyaa~"* the black cat cried.

*"at the ceiling! There is a spy, Oni-sama!"* Nabeshima Naoshige shouted and throw the dagger she held in one hand.

*"huun. Is it a spy from Kuroda Kanbei?! My Imouto, don't let them escape from Saga castle alive! Even if they are able to pass through the castle, you must pursue them everywhere!"*

*"I will leave it to the elite Hagakure-Shinobi squad! Absolutely don't let them return to Kuroda Kanbei! Oni-sama Kuroda Kanbei has been rising in action as expected and she has moved. Chikuzen and Hakata port has been emptied as expected and that Nakatsu Buzen which has been ceded through the private contract from the other side was a bait. That girl intent to use Ryuzoji clan's rise in action as the last move to reconcile Otomo and Shimazu army! if you want to delay your rise in action, the only time you have to hold your ground is now!"*

*"we cannot! We cannot miss this good opportunity to take Yanagawa castle! Even if that person have make a reconciliation, as long as we gain control of Shimabara and Yatsushiro first, it will be our victory! Kill that spy! If we failed to kill it in Hizen it will run after Higo!"*

*"if that spy is going toward the battlefield of Taka castle and encounter Ki Soun's army on the way.....at worst case we must kill it. Oni-sama"*

...

...

Kuroda Kanbei's spy.....Hachisuka Goemon *"I have been sensed by the black cat?!"* escaped while having her red eyes glitter. She escaped the traps of Saga castle which has been designed by Nabeshima Naoshige as Shinobi-Goroshi no Jo one after another while being chased by the elites of Hagakure-Shinobi squad whose ninja outfit consist of entirely black. She ran and jumped into the mountain. Hagakure-Shinobu squad encirclement is getting nearer. The merciless assault attacked Goemon. Goemon already has no other choice but to break this siege to survive. One. Two. Three. They are flying through the sky, and she cut the ninjas that were blocking her way with her blade and they fall from the trees. But Hagakure-Shinobi squad persistently pursue in perfect order. Even though Goemon have Taijutsu, she has no geographical advantage. She is slowly being cornered along the way. It's the absolute death. She has no time to think where she has gone now.

*"there is this kind of Shinobi squad in Kyushu.....this is.....Sagara-shi"*

*"it appears that, I won't be able to fulfill my duty"* the ninja Goemon prepared for her death.

She keeps continued running through the mountains all day without food nor sleeps.

Going keep further into the south.

Meanwhile, Hagakure-Shinobi squad merciless assault continued. She don't know how many person she had cut. She didn't count. Goemon has sustained innumerable wound herself. Her left hand that caught the poisoned kunai has become numb. While she is flying from tress to trees, her left hand blood vessels that has been teared up by the kunai, spill out its poison. Breaking through Hizen and then entering Chikugo and Higo.....in addition Taka castle at Hyuga is far away. Its necessary to cross over the harsh point of the mountain. Goemon's stamina has worn out because of hunger and blood loss. She felt dizzy. The sight of Hagakure-Shinobi squad has become distant. A little more. Just a little more, its possible to enter Hyuga from Higo.....she exerted her last willpower to jump.

But then Goemon saw. There is crowd of Shura marching over the plank bridge along the mountains of Higo. The Shuras is interrupted in their path. It's the Aso army that is led by Kai Soun. He seemed to have taken the field to attack Sagara clan territory. Kai Soun is still sworn honest loyalty towards Aso clan even though he is about to be killed by his lord in the battlefield. Even though he has received wounds at Hibikinohara, he has recovered his physical strength and is ready to take up a spear upon the horseback. He is literally like a monster. Also, Shinobi-Taijutsu is useless against this man who devotes himself with his self-taught unorthodox killing technique that he used to murder people.

Kai Soun who wore a black namban imported sunglasses upon a horse intersect his gaze to Goemon who is flying in the sky.

Kai Soun raised his sword cane up to the sky. It's a heretical instrument that expanded when flying and bend like a snake. The arm of Shoken-Goroshi. Its trajectory cannot be seen. Both of her stamina and willpower has been exhausted. Her eyes is blurry. She couldn't avoid it. *"I have noticed that I have being led to this death from the beginning by Nabeshima Naoshige"* she revolved through the air and by removing her joints on her shoulder and waist, she just barely avoided a fatal blow but an acute pain rang upon her back and Goemon's body fell.....she cannot choose where she would landed. Its not upon the tree branches nor on top of a rock but to the bottomless ravine. *"I have no excuses, Sagara-shi"* Goemon mutter while falling.

However, a bear hands caught Goemon.

*"gauu~!"*

*"Indou-shi"* Goemon called the name of the bear while her consciousness faded away.

Indou hold a letter from Sagara Tokuchiyo in its mouth. *"Kuroda-shi, please trust Tokuchiyo-dono and don't let Indou-shi waiting de-gozaru"*, she thought so. But Goemon's consciousness faded away and she had no power left to open and read the letter. She was put on top of Indou's back. Indou led a herd of bears which is Tokuchiyo's friend and began to run to the bottom of the velley. *"its impossible to*



*descend from the valley through horses” Kai Soun expressionlessly turned his back from the herd of bears.*

Thus, Goemon borrow Indou’s back to cross over the mountain of Hyuga.....which reached Taka castle.

※

*“at the time Ryuzoji Takanobu started his independence, he decided to first suppress Yanagawa castle which is the most important spot in Kita-Kyushu. He invited all of his benefactors – Kamachi clan into a feast and murdered them without mercy! Following that, Ryuzoji army will start to capture Arima clan territories for a few days, I was late de-gozaru!”* Goemon reported.....it was difficult for Kanbei to believe it.

*“Kamachi clan you say? They are subordinates to Otomo clan but aren’t they a benefactor that has rescued Ryuzoji Takanobu who is a vagrant in the past, twice? Is it even possible for him to do that?! Does Ryuzoji Takanobu intent to antagonize both Otomo and Shimazu clan?!”*

The injured old general whose sword has been broken and arrows exhausted – Kamachi Muneyuki, intrude in front of Kanbei *“i have a bad premonition that was caused when my heir and soldiers of Yanagawa castle didn’t participated in the battle. If Yanagawa castle is emptied, Ryuzoji Takanobu would raise an evil thought to capture Yanagawa castle.....he was prepared for that”* he bowed on his knees and lamented.

Kanbei noticed the fact that Kamachi Muneyuki’s heir took his soldiers back to Yanagawa castle, it has caused this result. In Kanbei’s original plan, Yanagawa castle as well as Tachibanayama castle and Iwaya castle, was meant to be a perfectly empty fort. If they leave some soldiers behind, the greedy Ryuzoji Takanobu might feel about stealing it. In case with Tachibana castle, because its an empty fort, the suspicious Ryuzoji Takanobu would rather leave the castle. However, even if they

are the ally of Takanobu's enemy, it was unbelievable for him to murder the Kamachi clan.

*"no matter how much of a hungry wolf that man Ryuzoji Takanobu is, I never thought that he would betray the Kamachi clan whom he owes a great debt! Furthermore, the most important place at Kita-Kyushu, the Yanagawa castle has been captured?! I intended to use Ryuzoji Takanobu but instead I have given him the ideal target? This is.....is this Simon's mistake.....?"*

*"I have committed a misreading that led to fatal mistake in the end"* Kanbei nearly collapses. But the words of two princess general supported her back.

*"certainly.....the murder of Kamachi clan is an unforgivable act that has stepped out from the law of Kyushu of Sengoku era.....but if you look at the opposite way, just now both of Otomo and Shimazu army has a reason to join their hand together to fight against Ryuzoji Takanobu. No matter how much people would say that you cannot survive these chaotic times without being a villain, the thing that Ryuzoji Takanobu did can never be forgiven. Ryuzoji army is powerful, ruthless and merciless. There is no time to hesitate. Both clan will reconciled immediately and.....Shimazu army need to march towards Higo to save Tokuchiyo and Arima clan right? Iyaa, nevertheless I am still looking poorly in this battle. Only Yoshihiro-chan who stand out"*

Shimazu Yoshihisa stamped out a seal of approval to the letter of reconciliation that Konoe Sakihisa has prepared.

*"Otomo army will goes north from Hyuga to Suo to prevent Mori army that advances to the capital. Simon. I leave all of Otomo army to you. Together with Tachibana and the other Shuras that Otomo clan is proud of. You who has wonderfully accomplished a reconciliation in this battlefield of Taka castle, you can do it"*

Otomo Sorin together with Muneshige and Shoun who supported the body of the severely injured Tachibana Dosetsu who stab a sword into the ground to continue standing above the ground.

Tsunokuma Sekisou who is the commander of Otomo vanguard unit which changes his military command for the sake of rushing ahead to save Tachibana clan *"its truly a wonderful command, a god like strategy. We promised never disobey the matchless strategist-dono's order again"* he promised.

*"sim! I have no excuses regarding Kamachi clan but Ryuzoji clan revolt and their advancement towards Shimabara peninsulas is advancing according to Simon's strategy. But Sorin? What are you going to do?"*

*"Sorin will fight Ryuzoji Takanobu. Because he is the enemy who betrayed Kamachi clan which is Sorin's retainer and he is the enemy who cut Sorin's Otouto in the battle of Imayama. Besides, the Arima clan is Christians and formed alliances with Otomo clan. even if Shimazu clan who advocates the expulsion of namban suddenly barged into the battle, they won't be able to gain their trust and they won't be able to control the allied forces. Therefore Sorin herself must go"*

*"your words are justified de-gozaru. It no longer can be stopped. Hime-sama has become a splendid person....."* Dosetsu shed tears. *"from now on, Hime-sama doesn't know the dread of battlefield. Namusanda"* Shoun laughed.

*"Dosetsu. Thank you. because Sorin can walk with her own legs now. everything is thanks to Dosetsu.....I keep depending on Dosetsu until now, I am sorry. If you didn't do anything until now, I wouldn't be able to stand up"*

*"Hime-sama. Its alright. We the elder are selfish people who want to willfully entrust our will to the youths. This Tachibana Dosetsu is overwhelmed with emotions for being able to live to see Hime-sama's gallant figure"*

*"Tachibana clan and Otomo Sorin. The lord and her retainers is the same as a family"* Yoshiharu thought so.

*"but, there is only one condition for Sorin to join Shimazu army and fight against Ryuzoji Takanobu"*

*"nn? Condition? What is it, what is it? Its surely would be a wicked condition, right?"* although Yoshihisa asked delightfully, the condition that Sorin asked is unexpected.

*“Sagara Yoshiharu must accompany Sorin! Unless he is there, Sorin won’t have any courage to go to the battlefield”*

*“eh? What, that? Only that?” Yoshihisa drop her shoulder in disappointment. “I understand” Yoshiharu nodded. Of course in truth, he wanted to return to Nobuna quickly. But, for Sorin who is finally able to gain courage to pass through the darkness and fate her own fate, the battle against Ryuzoji clan is the last barrier which she cannot avoid. So Yoshiharu accepted Sorin’s hope without hesitation.*

*“therefore, Kanbei. Lead Otomo army as a strategist in place of Sorin who is the present head of the clan and please stop the advance of Mori army. but, the advance towards Mori territory is impossible if we don’t stop the rampaging Ryuzoji clan. These two strategies that happened at the same time in west and east of Kyushu will collapses if either one of them fails. I will participate in the decisive battle against Ryuzoji army. perhaps my future knowledge will be useful to observe the war situation. I have such feeling”*

*“I though you will say that, fufufu. Dot worry, leave the rescue of Oda Nobuna and Akechi Mitsuhide to Simon. The supply goods has been arranged for the march from Hyuga to Mori’s territory. The foods. Weapons and water are plentiful”*

*“aah. I leave it to you. I will serves as a substitute for the injured Toshihisa. Kai Soun is already make an onslaught upon Sagara clan territory right Goemon? Then, Tokuzhiyo is in danger. I must hurry”*

When Yoshiharu express his participation in this anti-Ryuzoji war in response to Sorin’s request, Yoshihi immediately,

*“because she lend Indou to the ninja, Tokuchiyo’s war potential will be undermanned. I will go to Higo as well. even though I probably will fight against uncle.....uncle are probably expect to meet me”*

She grasped Yoshiharu’s hand.

*“thanks to Kanbei, only my fortitude that has been tempered but.....now that the handcuffs has been removed, I am able to walk freely. Your Onee-chan will fill the*

*spot in your strategist role. Furthermore, my incredulous wicked tongue are much better than your honesty in substituting Toshihisa"*

*"that woman has a slightly evil expression there, what the heck did she thought about me~!"* although Shimazu Toshihisa who received a medical care to her leg, shouted, Yoshihi didn't hear it.

*"Sagara Yoshiharu. You too, what the heck did you do? Suddenly and nonchalantly appeared in the battlefield like that. It was your trump card to voluntarily let yourself to be punished by decapitation right? I am amazed from the bottom of my heart. I cannot entrust Iehisa with you!"*

Yoshiharu who hear Toshihisa's abusive words and feel relieved for some reason, floated a wry smile and.....Shimazu Yoshihiro who patiently keep silent until now began to speak.

*"Kai Soun. In order to oppose that monster, either one of us, me or Tachibana Muneshige-dono is necessary. However, Tachibana Muneshie-dono must serve in Otomo vanguard unit on behalf on the injured Dosetsu-dono. I want to have a showdown with Kai Soun. I have committed a disgraceful blunder in the presence of Tachibana clan. I have lost sight of myself when my heart is disturbed by the sudden declaration of Yoshiharu-dono's execution. This time, I will fight in a way that it wouldn't ashamed the name of Takegami"*

*"hee~. You are showing a cute face like a pubescent girl. You are just a foolishly honest princess general who disregard a one on one battle conduct and exposed mine and Oyassan's disgraceful act as a doting parent"* Shoun gives a wry smile.

*"no. Shoun-dono's Zan-Dan is splendid. If you had Ken-Nagamitsu with you, I would probably....."*

*"for heaven's sake. That sword has been handed over to Muneshige. never once brought to the battlefield. If you are saying that, if Oyassan whom had been struck by a thunder and blowing himself up, if Oyassan is fighting you with his perfectly good health. In that case"*

*“even if Dosetsu-dono lost half of his body, by all rights, I should’ve been sliced. If at that time, Dosetsu-dono can control his leg freely while fighting, I would be knocked down in an instant”*

*“but you know, the situation wouldn’t be like that. Blowing oneself up without permission, that’s the way Oyassan goes. Even this time, that bastard collapses while walking towards you before he can cut you down. I who had been tasked to be his shield every time, doesn’t feel like living. Namusanda”*

*“fufufu. I guess that’s right”*

*“hoo. You who had been called as the demon, can laugh too.....your smiling face resembles Muneshige somewhere”*

*“I-I am not cute like Muneshige-dono!” Yoshihiro averted her eyes.*

*“well, let’s go lehisa. Ryuzoji Takanobu is rampaging and antagonizing all Shuras of Kyushu. He forsake his path of retreat and prepared for death. To become the Supreme Ruler of Kyushu or death, there is only two choices in that person’s mind. We will lose if clash against him in the front. If we don’t use strategy, we will lose. The Shura who can defeat that person who had become a demon is lehisa. Only you can. You are still young, though I don’t want you to fight against that man.....”*

lehisa closed her eyes and nodded *“nyaa”* while biting an akumaki for a nourishment. Tachibana Muneshige who has been granted Ken-Nagamitsu again, declared to Sorin.

*“milord. Sagara Yoshiharu-dono. And all of Satsuma Hayato. May luck be with you. I will stop Mori army advancement by all means.....in the fight against Yoshihiro-dono, I was trained as a Shura. As the substitute of Gifu-jo who is severely wounded, I will perform spearmanship that wouldn’t ashamed the title of “Nishikoku Musou” that Sagara Yoshiharu-dono gave me”*

(this is the legendary Meito.....the double edged Chokuto – “Ken-Nagamitsu”. If Muneshige-dono had this sword in her hand, I would’ve become a corpse on the battlefield) Yoshihiro trembled. But, Muneshige *“it’s a family heirloom after all”* keep on dodging Tocco’s attack while carrying Ginchiyo who ride upon her back.

*"Kobayakawa-san, I am sorry" Sagara Yoshiharu who is in daze and drop his shoulders, didn't notice the gaze of awe and respect that Yoshihiro turn to himself.*

*"Yoshiharu-dono. Even if it will become a fierce battle, Kobayakawa Takakage-dono and Kikkawa Motoharu-dono who yearn for you will not lose their life, please be relieved" Muneshige smiled. "putting aside Kobayakawa-san who yearn for me, as for Kikkawa-san, perhaps, Kikkawa-san would fly into rage" Yoshiharu involuntarily brought a wry smile.*

*"Muneshige. you won't die right? The prophecy that has bind Sorin is already been overturned by Tachibana clan"*

*"I won't milord.....no, my Aneue. You overturned the prophecy by your own will"*

*".....please. Please promise me. You must not die earlier than Sorin even if you fight in the battlefield"*

*"yes, I promise!"*

Tachibana Muneshige and Otomo Sorin embraced each other and said brief goodbye and promise a re-encounter.

*"now, hurried your preparation for departure, Kanbei. I will make your grand strategy succeed after we win against Ryuzoji army"*

*"Sagara Yoshiharu. although I am unhappy about the matter concerning about Yanagawa castle.....after Ryuzoji army is defeated, Simon's strategy will be completed. Of course. Will believe in Simon again?"*

*"the future is uncertain. But the future will changed whether you believed in it or doubt it. Therefore, I believed in you" Yoshiharu laughed.*

Kanbei unconsciously moisten her eyes and buried her face in Yoshiharu's chest.

*"mufu~! Somehow, Yoshiharu, you smelled like ash~? \*sniff \*sniff"*

*"its probably because I eat too much akumaki"*

However, there is two princess generals who pulled Kanbei away from Yoshiharu.

*“yes Simon, the friendship embrace last until there! from here and before, its Sorin’s turn! right, Sagara Yoshiharu? you said that you will accompany me in the battle against Ryuzoji army. you are not choosing Oda Nobuna but instead its Sorin, right~? How wonderful~! With this, you and Sorin are genuine lovers, right?!”*

*“S-Sagara Yoshiharu-dono! E-even though I am dressed like a man, a-although you already have someone else to be your wife, if its alright with you, I want you to place me to the lowest seat among Yoshiharu-dono’s circle of lovers.....”*

*“eh~?”* Yoshiharu and everyone else stiffened.

Yoshiharu’s left and right arm are being held by two people.

Otomo Sorin and Tachibana Muneshige begun to rapidly exclaim something at the same time. They are mutually speaking in trance and haven’t noticed that both they are in complete synchronization with each other.

*“this is the first time Sorin has awakened to something called the true love! Sorin is not alone anymore. Its all thanks to you Sagara Yoshiharu! from on please stand next to Sorin and support Sorin as a lover!”*

*“fufufufu I am a licentious man, no, my apologies, I am a woman! even though people have just been killed in this war.....b-but, we will start a new fight after this! The only time to convey my feelings is now! th~, this is my first love! The fact that my heart fluttered when you touch my chest, its because I have fallen in love with you, Yoshiharu-dono”*

*“.....eh~? Muneshige, what are you saying? Do you intent to steal Yoshiharu with force? Touching your chest, you say? What does that mean?”*

*“eh~? What does milord, no, what on earth is Aneue talking about?1 Weren’t Aneue already been rejected at Mushiga?!”*

*“its because Sorin don’t understand true love at that time! Its different now! w-wait a second! What do you mean that your c-chest has been touched~?! Muneshige, you.....intent to secretly steal the lover of your own Ane? Are you an Otouto with*



*such wicked mind?! You are first and foremost, more or less, a man right~! A male general right~!"*

*"just because Aneue is able to come into the battle, please don't make Yoshiharu-dono as your lover on your own accord! Its simply Aneue's wrong impression~, a misunderstanding~! Its an extreme nuisance to other people~! In reality, Yoshiharu-dono wanted to go back to Oda Nobuna-sama immediately. He endured, he remained for Aneue only for just one battle left! Any more than this is being selfish towards Yoshiharu-dono!"*

*"so that's what it is, its Yoshiharu's answer!"*

*"that's different~! Yoshiharu-dono is devoted to his love! Because Yoshiharu-dono already has Oda Nobuna-sama as his full-fledged lawful wife candidate, by all mean please line up as the last lover in the waiting line~!"*

*"hey, Yoshiharu! you are leaving Oda Nobuna right? Which side do you pick? Is it the Ane or Otouto? Don't tell me, you are choosing the Otouto?"*

*"its impossible to separate them! Yoshiharu-dono. Because for such gentleman, Aneue would certainly cause discord with Oda Nobuna-sama. It would become a war between Otomo and Oda clan! b-but, this Muneshige, be it's a luck or misfortune, I am a married male general. S-so long as I am not found out as a girl by Oda Nobuna-sama, even if I stand next to you, e-even if we share the same bed, i-it won't be a strange things. T-this is also, s-something like a relationship"*

*"ah, no. both of you, because I don't understand what are you guys are talking about at all, lets calm down for a while.....you guys are being excited because of the previous battle. This is what is called as "Suspension Bridge Effect", yes. You would certainly regain your calm in about three days"*

Kanbei and Yoshihi looked at Yoshiharu in cold stares.

*"mufu~! As expected, you are that kind of a man! you increases the number of your local wives by repeatedly and irresponsibly acting and speaking without thinking about the consequences again, Sagara Yoshiharu! did you rub Muneshige's chest*

*while spending one night with Sorin at Mushiga?! monkey, you are a monkey! You cannot make any excuses to Simon anymore!”*

*“even the alliance between Otomo and Oda clan that has gone well until now, may unexpectedly broke down. No, even before that, the wonderful sibling relationship between Otomo Sorin and Tachibana Muneshige is going to break already.....I told you to leave everything to your Onee-chan when things become unbearable to you as a man. it bring hardship if you have an idiot Otouto huh? Yare yare”*

The Shuras of Otomo and Shimazu army who shares sake to each other after the battle, suddenly laugh.

*“its only natural if you choose the lord, Sagara Yoshiharu!”*

*“I cried when Sorin-sama finally crawled up from the deep sadness and regain her footing.....”*

*“do you understand, boy?”*

*“no, I recommend Muneshige-sama~!”*

*“that’s right! A man who abandon a woman for the sake of his master, is a person who discard his life!”*

*“Muneshige-sama has awakened to a maiden’s heart! how joyful!”*

*“if you don’t respond to Muneshige-sama’s feeling.....you bastard aren’t a man, Sagara Yoshiharu!”*

*“do you understand, boy?”*

*“its different! It’s a misunderstanding!”* in Yoshiharu’s back who is trying to escaped backward, there is Tachibana Dosetsu who is sitting upon a palanquin and Takahashi Shoun, waiting.

*“geeh. My path to retreat has been blocked?”*

*“iyaa, happiness and misfortune are linked together, Sagara Yoshiharu-dono! Muhoho, because my “son in law” is a “man”, she didn’t count as a local wife! A*

*man and man who fought together in the battlefield are bounded together in a firm friendship.....such thing is common in the world of Sengoku era! Don't be reserved!"*

If he said that he will refrain himself, *"this fool~!"* Dosetsu would definitely cut down Yoshiharu with his dreadful fighting spirit, no question asked.

*"oh dear, although it's a strange things to us, the things called as Shudo seems to be popular among male commandeers too. Is it called as capricious to be forced upon Shudo? Don't tell me that springs really has come to Muneshige? I just don't know what kind of life she would have until then.....namusanda"*

*"Shoun-san? I have no preference with Shudo or Chigo at all. In the first place, it's a fraud because Muneshige is a girl"* Yoshiharu thought.

*"Dosetsu? Shoun? You two interfered in Sorin's love who is your lord? You disloyal men~!"*

*"be quiet Hime-sama! Its outrageous to steal Oda Nobuna-dono's devoted lover! In that respect, because Muneshige is an excellent and modest girl, she will not become an obstacle to Nobuna-dono's romance! I realized it in an instant! The reason why Muneshige became a male general and had Ginchiyo as her wife, it was all for this moment! This is the divine protection of Usa Hachiman Daibosatsu!"*

*".....ugugu.....Dosetsu.....Dosetsu has betrayed me.....Usa Hachimanguu must be burned again....."*

*"well then, Yoshiharu-dono. Before you are separated from Muneshige, spend the night just the two of you! since its more or less, a male bonding, don't be reserved! The child who will born, is the child between Ginchiyo and Muneshige! what if, instead of Muneshige, you may give an offspring to Ginchiyo! With this Tachibana clan and Sagara clan will be families! It's a joyful thing. don't tell me, that I am able to see my grandchild's face. Quick. Please show me my grandchild quickly. quickly while I am still alive. Muhohoho"*

*"Jii-san. Because you had excessive bleeding, won't your consciousness hazy?" Yoshiharu wanted to retort. "zugogogogogo....." Dosetsu is releasing a demonic fighting spirit and Yoshiharu cannot say anything else any longer.*

*"wait a sec~! could a married couple steal another person's lover~?! Well~, Sagara Yoshiharu! this Ginchiyo refuse your child~! Tocco, attack Yoshiharu!"*

*"wa~, wait Ginchiyo! I am not a lolicon!"*

*"aah.....thank you very much Gifu-jo! Oyaji-dono! Certainly, this is obstructing the path of love for Aneue....."*

*"hee. The path of loyalty and filial piety and the path of romance are an exception, Muneshige. even though your lord is your rival in love, even though your Ane is your enemy, don't restrain yourself. We will support you until this much! You are a good child. The man whom you loved are also a good man! follow your heart's desire! Namusanda"*

*"Tachibana clan have betrayed me?!" Sorin who had teary eyes "absolutely not! The Otouto stealing the lover of her Ane is absolutely too strange!" started acting violently and cling to Muneshige to push her down. "Aneue. Only this that I cannot hand over. I will not hesitate!" Muneshige counter attacked.*

*"a~! this Otouto who had girlish face and steal another person lover, is not necessary! Get drown in Takigawa!"*

*"no way! Aneue should get drown!"*

Yoshihi who seem disgusted,

*"immediately after the siblings pledge their vow, they got into a quarrel?.....well, perhaps they are in such good terms so much that they would quarrel like this"*

While setting her gaze in one line *"I want to leave this place quickly. If I don't hurry to Tokuchiyo's place"* and the sister duo of Shimazu Yoshihiro and Iehisa were also baffled.

*"\*cough. As soon as they know that each other yearned for Sagara Yoshiharu, rather than showing the spirit of mutual concession, they have started a big fight.....how unsightly.....lehis. We sisters must never be like that, we must take each other hand and be in good term"*

*"nyaa. I assume that Yoshihiro-Nee has given up on Yoshiharu? you have conceded to your Imouto? As expected from my Shimazu Ane"*

*".....no, I didn't say such thing"*

*"you are not giving up?"*

*"mattaku. The youngest child is too selfish. But, she is cute.....that's troublesome"*

*"ehehehe"*

*"but, the sight of this scandalous dispute between siblings that happen before our eyes, as expected, cause a headache.....haa. After all. Yoshiharu-dono is the bad one. Yoshiharu-dono. You should take responsibility for the words that you have spoken and the actions that you showed before"*

*"huh? Yoshihiro? W-what responsibility? What should I do with this? Err~"*

*"haa. You tried to settle down the situation at Taka castle by having your head decapitated again just like back then in Kizakihara. This is the war against Ryuzoji army, you must absolutely stop your method of exchanging your life for someone's will. The enemy is the ruthless Supreme Ruler – Ryuzoji Takanobu. If you do the same things next, I cannot guarantee your life this time. Because recently....."*

*"no. this time, its different when I was captured by you at Kizakihara. Isn't it because I believed in the last move that Kanbei used? I was stalling for that reason. Well, it would be over for me if it wasn't in time, I had narrowly escaped death after Yoshihi-Neesan and Sorin led the bodyguard units to the battlefield"*

*"n-no, its not like that, that time I was.....that, I was just too surprised, you see"*

*“aah. When Dosetsu-jiisan suddenly collapsed, it became chaos from there.....I cannot see Yoshihiro, Shoun and Muneshige’s movement at all. As expected, what on earth make you so impatient to end it”*

*“t-that time I was, far from protecting you, I was fascinated by you, Dosetsu-dono was in danger and I nearly slice him”* Yoshihiro almost blurted it out. But, she dared to see the words. Its because she finally understood that the reason why Dosetsu didn’t cut her at time was because he wanted to see Yoshiharu’s face and then he lost his balance and collapsed.

(Iehisa shouldn’t fall into danger for the same reason as mine in the battle against Ryuzoji army. no matter how much the body and spirit are trained through the method of Satsuma Hayato, the things that is overlooked.....it’s the thing that cannot be completely tempered.....that is love. No matter how much a princess general has gone through death training and charging through the battlefield, they cannot throw away the feeling of love. Even for “Nishikoku Musou” Tachibana Muneshige. even me.....Iehisa, I am worried about you)

Yoshihiro cannot stop her uneasiness.

Shimazu Yoshihisa who was completely left out in the background *“as expected, I have to usurp Sagara Yoshiharu to become a genuine villain. If I jumped out from the side and become the last winner, everyone will be surprised”* floated a black smile and clapped Yoshihiro’s shoulder.

*“its alright~! Because just like Iehisa-chan, Yoshihiro-chan are also lucky! Look look, I have finished signed the contract!”*

Here is the reconciliation between Otomo clan of Bungo and Shimazu clan of Satsuma. The so called *“Satsu-Hou Reconciliation”* was formed.

*“both clan has fought at Taka castle as of now de-ojaru! But there is no time to rest de-ojaru. They will be separated into two immediately and goes to their respective battles de-Ojaru!”*

*“ho ho ho. The mission of Satsu-Hou Reconciliation has finally been accomplished de-ojaru! Maro himself will satnd as the vanguard of Otomo army de-ojaru! Did you*

*see this Sagara Yoshiharu? this is the authority of Kampaku de-Ojaru!"* Konoe Sakhihisa showed his front teeth which has been dyed black and shouted in abrasive voices.

*"as expected, I want to kill that smile de-gozaru"* Goemon was trembling with unpleasantness after a long time while closing both of her ears.

...

...

...

## **Chapter 5 - Takachiho**

Lets's rewind the time just a little.

Honshu – the Oda-Matsudaira allied forces led by Oda Nobuna, Koushuu Takeda army led by Takeda Shingen, it has become a full scale outbreak of war at Matsudaira Motoyasu's Nagashino castle. Takeda army that has surrounded Nagashino castle, stop their encirclement in order to crush Oda rear guard that has begun to advance to the west. On the other hand, Oda Nobuna has prepared 3000 Teppo unit together with Takigawa Kazumasu, build a long horse barricade in Shitarahara and adopted defensive plan in order to block Takeda's cavalry charge.

But, on that day, rain fell to Shitarahara.....

Suwa drums resounded from Takeda camp, the crimson Takeda cavalry has started preparation to break the horse barricade that Oda army built.

The proud veteran princess general of Takeda clan. the Takeda Shinten'O – Yamagata Masakage. Naito Masatoyo. Kousaka Danjou. And Baba Nobufusa who has changed to Baba Nobuharu. Each one of them is a match for a thousand. They are great commander who has the capacity of a feudal lord.

These girls that led the crowd of horse riding warriors, line up at one line *“at that time”* and waited.

*“not good. No matter if we have taken measures against the heavy rains, with this rain, the firepower of Tanegashimas is reduced to half. And Juubei is.....”*

A swift horse from vice general of Akechi Mitsuhide – Saito Toshimitsu has reached Nobuna.

Right now, Mitsuhide had been isolated in Tanba frontline. To prevent the Kikkawa Motoharu advancement to the capital through <sup>Northern Mountain Circuit</sup> San'indou, to the place at Tanba where Hatano clan was captured, Yamana clan who held a stronghold that blocked the path from Mori clan territory to Tanba, has abandon Oda clan and bad news came that they change sides to Mori clan, because of that Mitsuhide become isolated in Tanba.

This morning, a letter from Mitsuhide to Nobuna said *“the secret plan to maintain Tanba frontline has been invented”*. For some reason there was a bad premonition. That premonition came true. Approximately at the same time when Saito Toshimitsu sent a letter to Nobuna. In the Toshimitsu's, it was written this way.

*“my master Akechi Mitsuhide-sama has sent her own mother as a hostage to Hatano clan in order to make peace with Hatano clan of Tanba. Its possible to gain time and delayed Kikkawa Motoharu's invasion towards Tanba just a little bit. Lastly my master who was reluctant for the responsibility “if anything happen to Hahaue” went to Hatano clan for her mother. However, all people of Hatano clan once have betrayed Mitsuhide-sama and make an onslaught from behind. I believe that trust will not be obtained even if they serve Oda clan now. Since Mitsuhide-sama's mother has been taken as shield on the pretext of being a hostage, I am afraid that it would bring advantageous situation to Mori army.....although Mitsuhide-sama is a perfect person, she has one fatal weakness as a general. She trust other people too much”*



*“Juubei’s mother.....to Hatano clan.....she shouldn’t did that. I think that something very dreadful is happening”* Nobuna didn’t suppress the beating of her heart anymore. *“Yoshiharu come back quickly”*

*“Nobuna-chan? You look pale, is everything alright?”*

Here at the main camp at Shitarahara.

Takigawa Kazumasu who sit on the next seat seem to be worried and looked at Nobuna.

*“.....Sakon. Not yet. We still cannot let Takeda cavalry to charge. We mustn’t fight until this rainy weather clear up. I shut the whole army inside the barricade without moving. The trench used to prevent Takeda cavalry charge is not completed yet.....in the end, the fragile horse barricade is just for a show. At the area beyond the barricade, is trap to drop the cavalry to a labyrinth made from earthworks that has been combined together. I have been taught by Yoshiharu. its an open battle formation “The Trench” that is used in modern warfare. It had been improved to specialized in anti-cavalry battle. A grand trap to kill cavalries. The wide plain of this Shitarahara itself is reformed as a huge fort, so to speak. It will take several days to completion. We must earn a few days. That is the strict order for Matsudaira army”*

*“this is an intention to challenge the ancient japan’s field, in fact, crushing the encampment at the labyrinth is like sieging a castle. And then there is 3000 Teppo units here. It will be the death to Takeda cavalry”*

*“yes, but I don’t think that it would go well. it would, if the enemy is an ordinary military commander but Takeda Shingen is a cautious woman. I will certainly abandon my trap. She should’ve sensed that Shitarahara is a death trap to lure the Takeda cavalry. Therefore, after one or two skirmishes, at some point Takeda Shingen will certainly delay the decisive battle completely until she has devised a method to capture the field camp. It would came to a stalemate”*

However at this time.

A messenger suddenly came from Matsudaira army that guard the west side of the long camp of Oda – Matsudaira alliance.

*“its our Hime-sama’s decision that this war wouldn’t be won without a gamble. A suicide squad has been formed. Sakai Tadatsugu’s army has taken off to the battlefield. They cross Toyogawa that flowed to the south, advancing through the mountains, to capture Tobigasuyama fort that Takeda clan has built behind Nagashino castle, in order to cut off the Takeda army way to retreat”*

*“a cut off?! You can’t. its too quick to cut off Takeda army path to retreat! We will move after we completed the open battle formation! No, a cut off tactic is useless against Takeda Shingen!”* Nobuna raises a voice like a scream.

*“Takechiyo?! What are you doing? Did she cannot withstand the pressure against Takeda Shingen again just like Mikatagahara? That’s not possible. For that child to make the same mistakes twice”*

Nobuna ride on a horse and rushes to Matsudaira Motoyasu’s camp.

Matsudaira Motoyasu is sitting upon a namban chair and biting her nail while looking pale. Its her bad habit ever since she was little. When she is cornered, she has a habit of biting her own nail.

*“Takechiyo! Pull back the detached army immediately! This confrontation aren’t meant for a decisive battle! We will make it a stalemate in order to delay Takeda forces visit to the capital! We would clashed against Takeda forces, Mori army that advanced from San’in region and Uesugi Kenshin who has stand up again”*

*“.....Kichi-Oneesama. if we shut ourselves at Shitarahara while holding the trump card of Oda Army – the 3000 Teppou squad, Akechi Mitsuhide-san and Shibata Katsuie-san will be subjugated by the enemy. To begin with, is Kichi-Oneesama wouldn’t be able to accomplish Tenka Fubu if you cannot win against Takeda Shingen-san. This is a gambling”*

There is something wrong with Matsudaira Motoyasu’s tone and expression. *“has her heart broken after tasting the horror of Takeda cavalry at Mikatagahara? No. that’s not possible. Although Takechiyo looked weak, she is a thoroughly tenacious princess general. She won’t make a gamble about life and death with the current*

*circumstances. Furthermore, her behavior is similar to dragging me and Oda army.....”*

But, the figure of the princess general in front of Nobuna’s eyes is certainly Motoyasu herself.

Younger Sister Protegee

The pitiful Takechiyo is the childhood friend and Imouto-bun of Nobuna of Owari after being she was abducted by the Oda clan.

If it was somebody else, she would be able to noticed.

*“this is absolutely strange. Wake up Takechiyo! There is no princess general who boast a strong perseverance like you in japan.....for that reason, I expect you to be the ruler of japan once Tenka Fubu is achieved”*

*“ufufu. I am grateful for your blessing~. But. Takeda Shingen-san is stronger at war than Kichi-Onesama. the reconciliation like the battle of Gifu is not possible anymore. Shinegn-san will not retreat. At any rate, Takeda forces visit towards the capital is due to Shingen-san’s Chichiue strict order”*

*“from Takeda Nobutora? That man still hasn’t abandon the world? Takechiyo, why do you know about this secret?”*

*“ah well~, now that you mention it, we are going to tell you about it, ufufufu.....”*  
there was an inconspicuous princess general who waited like a shadow next to Takechiyo.....rather a general, she is a delicate maiden like an artist or a master of tea ceremony.....she answered to Nobuna in gloomy laughter. She wear a raccoon ear on her head like Motoyasu.

*“you are?!”*

*“ufufu.....have you forgotten Nobuna-sama? I am Honda Yahachirou Masanobu. I am Motoyasu-sama’s strategist. I have been wandering around for a long time and joined Honbyo temple riot without abandoning my faith to O’Neko-sama. I have serves as a strategist in the battle with Oda army. I naturally obtained information from various scenes behind the back while resigned as a samurai and wandering around from place to place”*

*"de,aruka. I cannot remember.....your shadow is too thin"*

*"fufufu. I have examined the true identity of the strategist in the shadow, which is Takeda Nobutora-dono who made the encirclement of Oda clan. It was during the riot of Nagashima of Ise, isn't it? After I heard about Nobutora-dono became the strategist of Kitabatake clan of Ise and subdued a large number of Kuki pirates, from there, after I followed Nobutora-dono's footstep while walking out from the people along the way.....beyond that point, Konoe Sakihisa-sama was mentioned"*

*".....although I know that Takeda Nobutora was exiled from Imagawa clan of Suruga to Ise, there was a connection to Konoe from that point.....?"*

*"because Konoe-sama was afraid that harm will come to Himiko-sama and didn't confessed at any cost, a certain person would be spilt apart quickly. The fact is, its not worrying about what will happen to other person than Motoyasu-sama.....that's right. Motoyasu-sama renamed herself by using the opportunity from this battle. Because she cannot control the retainers and branch family of Matsudaira clan, let alone receiving the title of Mikawa-no-kami from Yamato Goshu, she remained a country samurai, Matsudaira clan of Mikawa forever. Therefore, the certain betrayer who ran away from Hime and joined the riot, made her appearances. Fufufu"*

*"hai~. There is Yahachirou's advice to me to rename myself with the name that I have desired long ago~. Kichi-Oneesama, I will introduce myself as Tokugawa Ieyasu"*

*".....Tokugawa, Ieyasu.....Mikawa-no-kami?"*

*"Kichi-Oneesama? Tokugawa Ieyasu is thoroughly an equal ally to Oda clan.its not a retainer to Kichi-Oneesama~. the status is different from Shibata Katsuie and Sagara Yoshiharu. I am fully insist on changing to this name"*

*"with this the whole Matsudaira clan is the servant of Motoyasu-sama who turned into Ieyasu-sama. Finally, Ieyasu-sama has obtained an authority of a daimyo of a country and become strong. Nobuna-sama? In the future, Ieyasu-sama.....don't give "order" to our Hime. The two people are ally till the end. Even if you both are*

*similar to being an Ane and and Imouto.....if Nobuna-sama overworked our Hime, this Honda Masanobu will not allow it. Fufufu”*

*Honda Masanobu.....Tokugawa Ieyasu.....no. something is different. Those two smiles are wicked. This is not Takechiyo. As if she have become a totally different person. But why? I don't understand. Did she been manipulated by Honda Masanobu?*

*“fufufu. Nobuna-sama? If Sakai Tadatsugu's detached forces succeeded in their cut off tactic, the Takeda cavalry that charged at the whole army at Shitarahara, will have no way to survive. Even if the cut off failed, Takeda Shingen would judge” it's a good now that Oda clan has made a blunder”, it's the same thing. that would be a trouble”*

*“Honda Masanobu? You used Sakai Tadatsugu who is the elder of Matsudaira clan as a disposable pawn?!”*

*“its “Virtue(Toku)-River(Gawa)-clan”, Nobuna-sama. Sakai clan has the highest social status among Matsudaira branch clan. because they are veteran and gloomy clan who intervenes in Hime's workd in many ways, wouldn't it be a good bargain if they die in battle? I was nearly killed by the enraged Honda Heihachiro also known as Tadakatsu who opposed against my plan, because that woman dislike a certain person who is like a femme fatale in the past, Ieyasu-sama dismissed her by saying “don't bring up your personal feelings”. Although we are in the same Honda clan, why is Heihachiro is so dumb?”*

*“you intent to forcibly hasten the outbreak of the war until that much?! The battle formation at Shitarahara still hasn't been completed yet! Furthermore, the rain which is the weakness of Tanegashimas has fallen today! If both army are trampled down by Takeda cavalry, Takechiyo's insistence for independency from Oda clan will come for nothing!”*

*Honda Masanobu floated a wicked smile that cannot be imagined from her lovely looks.*

*“well then, what should we do? Tokugawa clan is a thorough independent daimyo clan. we are in the same boat with Oda clan but we have no obligation to share the same destiny. But if we betrayed Oda clan while having a reinforcement, our Hime – Tokugawa Ieyasu’s fame as a loyal princess general will be tarnished, because of that we are not going to betray Nobuna-sam during the battle. Therefore, at today’s evening, both Oda and Tokugawa clan will probably fall together. Right, Nobuna-sama? Wouldn’t it better to withdraw from Shitarahara immediately? Ufufu”*

*“there is no way that would happen. Even for you Takechiyo”* for Nobuna who has tasted various rebellion and betrayal until now, only Tokuchiyo whom she believed without any reason, that won’t betray her. no, there is no need for her to believe it. They both had spent their childhood together. However, she don’t understand what kind of trick that Honda Masanobu who has returned to her duty, used to ensnare Motoyasu. No. its not Matsudaira Motoyasu anymore. Its Tokugawa Ieyasu. *“Ieyasu’s eyes that look on me is cold.....or rather, its like there is no emotion”* it’s a gaze that hold neither interest nor hatred towards Nobuna. Nobuna was hit by a feeling as if her foots is falling in. it was heartbreaking. As if, there is a big hole in her heart.

(I don’t know how the situation will progress. The idea of Tenka Fubu is possible when Takechiyo are given the task to control Tohoku region as a start. A task.....that’s right. The only task I asked from Takechiyo is to block Takeda army advancement to the capital. I might have been treating Takechiyo like a trench. Because she is my childhood friend, I might depend too much on Takechiyo. Juubei. Yoshiharu. I am already might not be able to come back alive from Shitarahara.....) Nobuna trembled.

(.....Yoshiharu.....please.....come quickly .....Juubei.....me.....save us...!)

✕

At the ground of Takachiho – Gaspard who keep a searching group beside him to stay in this place after entrusting the detached forces to Tachibana clan, have finally found what he is searching for.

A dim cave that stretched in the mountains of Takachiho.

Gaspard who has reached the deepest part of the cave muttered “*Gracias*”.

Frois conveyed an urgent message behind Gaspard.

*“the reconciliation between Otomo and Shimazu clan has been formed in Taka castle. Of course, Sagara Yoshiharu-san still survived. Gaspard-sama”*

*“.....I see. As expected, fate still sided on Sagara Yoshiharu and Oda Nobuna.....”*

*“you should give up. To erase Yoshiharu-san’s existence from this world of Sengoku era. This, because of Simon-san’s craftiness and the power of Otomo-sama’s feeling has surpassed your ingenuity, the reconciliation of both army has been formed.....as the result of planning a plot to kill him, if Oda Nobuna-sama is perished, even your goal will be lost”*

*“did Sagara Yoshiharu return to Honshuu together with Don Simon?”*

*“no. to fight against Ryuzoji army that has risen in revolt in Hizen. It seemed that Otomo-sama implored it. Although Otomo-sama has already escaped from your control but because its not possible for her to stand in the battlefield alone. One more battle. In order to settle the dispute against Ryuzoji-sama who killed her Otouto. Yoshiharu-san’s support is necessary”*

*“in that case, fate is yet to be decided. If Ryuzoji Takanobu defeat him in the battlefield.....I will still survive as the result, I am able to serve under Oda Nobuna as her new strategist, if he is killed in battle, Sorin-sama will have no choice but to need me again too”* Gaspard smiled.

*“Ryuzoji army has overwhelming advantages after overturning Don Simon’s prediction and capturing Yanagawa castle. Once Ryuzoji army beat Sagara Yoshiharu, I must return quickly to Sorin-sama”*

*“you are too obsessed in killing Yoshiharu-san until this much. Can’t you take your hand and struggled together with him to change Nobuna-sama’s future?”*

*“unfortunately, I cannot. There is no way to change Oda Nobuna’s fate other than making her abandon love and become a virgin queen, Frois”*

*“you don’t have the faith of a Christian. Is there is something about a virgin queen that is related to make the European to recognize Nobuna-sama as a queen of civilized nation? But also, I think that there is something different”*

*“ah, its different. Of course that is one of the reason. The true reason is.....for something more desperate Frois”*

*“.....does it has something to do with the future foreseen by the art of clairvoyance? Is it about when the love between Nobuna-sama and Yoshiharu-san would bring ruin? But you shouldn’t be able to predict Yoshiharu-san’s future”*

*“I cannot tell you the detail yet. More importantly Frois, I have found the thing that I sought for in Takachiho.....my victory is coming. The history of Zipang is changing. To the right direction.....”*

Frois aren’t able to find the treasure tool that Gaspard has said to be found in the darkness of the cave. What did he find in Takachiho? What it will be used for? Its impossible for Frois who isn’t familiar with the mythology of Zipang to understand it.



At this time, Yoshiharu and the other cannot sense the incident that is happening in Honshuu. But, immediately after the reconciliation at Hyuga, Yoshiharu and the other are making preparation for the anti-Mori and anti-Ryuzoji battle without sleep or eating together.

As such.....Kuroda Kanbei is unusually wilted up when observing the open sea of Hyuga from the sandy beach.



Kanbei felt responsible for not being able to prevent the tragedy around Yanagawa castle. It meant to deceive Gaspard but, she had betrayed Oda clan even if its temporarily.

*".....even if its for the sake of the strategy, Simon has betrayed Oda Nobuna who has fall into predicament.....would I even be allowed to serve Oda Nobuna again now? would I be forgiven.....? Although Sagara Yoshiharu who had come together with me to Kyushu could understand it, many generals of Oda clan will doubt it.....wouldn't it better for Simon to leave Oda clan now? right now there is Sagara Yoshihi for Yoshiharu. it is also because of Sagara Yoshihi that Sorin has finally stand up on her own. She is a vice general who has both the passion of a commander and ingenuity of a strategist....."*

*"what are you talking about? A meek Kanbei is unlike Kanbei at all. Even Yoshihi-Neesan indirectly thanked you for she was able to matured after being forcibly imprison at Mushiga by Kanbei"*

Yoshiharu who appeared behind Kanbei's back unnoticed, pat Kanbei's head.

*"uwa, you surprised me~"*

*"its an usual thing that you do things carelessly. Nowadays people care less about it. Your rebellious performance is similar like eating too much dumpling while travelling and then got a stomachache"*

*"is that the way to comfort someone?!"*

*"come on, cheer up. Aren't the grand counter attack of Otomo army and anti-Ryuzoji army must advance advanced at the same time at east and west of Kyushu? Even if either one of them failed, I won't be in time to rescue Nobuna or Juubei. Next time we will met at Honshuu, Kanbei"*

Pinky Promise

*"Yubikiri. Do you know that there is a culture called Yubikiri? Has it been introduced in Sengoku era yet? Recently, I have begun to lost the cultural differences between the Sengoku era and the future"* although Yoshiharu try to take Kanbei's finger while laughing, Kanbei blushed *"do-don't touch me"* and resisted.

*“what is it?”*

*“yo-you even made Tachibana Muneshige and Otomo Sorin as your local wife. The “Present Genji” doesn’t have any credibility!”*

*“like I said. I am not making everybody as my local wife”*

*“how dare you said that with a straight face. Weren’t both Muneshige and Sorin confessed their love to you at the same time?! Because Sorin has obstinate and selfish personality, you wouldn’t be able to escape, Muneshige is a good child but Tachibana clan will surround and corner you in full forces! What are you going to do about it?!”*

*“h-how you say? Erm~. Because I have Nobuna, I keep on rejecting”*

*“haa.....li-listen Sagara Yoshiharu. I tell you this, Simon will not become your local wife”*

*“nn? That is, of course right? What are your suddenly saying?”*

*“.....because Hanbei will get angry”*

*“eh?”*

*“ne-never mind. Also! Simon will properly promise not to quietly leaving you this time. Therefore, you must promise me too! Even though you are always ready to lay down your life, don’t die in battle without Simon’s permission, Sagara Yoshiharu!”*

*“even if you say so, at any rate the battle at Kyushu is harsh and Ryuzoji army are much more relentless than Shimazu forces and Kai Soun. Though I will make every effort to survive, I cannot make a definite promise”*

*“hmp. It can’t be helped, Yoshiharu. don’t forget Simon’s word. If you have trouble with the battle against Ryuzoji army then escape to the shore”*

*“.....the shore? I don’t get it but I understand”*

*“that’s good. Don’t die. What would Hanbei think if you left selfishly?!”*

*"I see, in that case there is no helping it. Its like if Hanbei got taken as a hostage. I understand, I promised. I will absolutely live and return to Honshuu. You have to be careful too"*

*"uwaa~! You didn't make a definite promise a while ago~! You promise it with a smile when Hanbei's name come out!"*

*"hahaha. Its alright. I won't die until the flag of Kurokan Ichiryuu flutters in Rome. I will certainly find the medicine that will completely cure Hanbei's disease in the other side of the sea. The future that we have in our hand will not end in Honnouji. That thing is just the beginning"*

(I wonder if its bad for Hanbei if I monopolizes this person's smile in the beach of Hyuga) although Kanbei hesitated, she nodded.

*".....yes!"*

*"as expected, that Kanbei, did she get taller? No, somehow.....why do I thought that Kanbei totally look like a cute pubescent girl?"* Yoshiharu was confused when looking at Kanbei's frighteningly dazzling smile just for an instant.



...

...

...